

JERSEY BEAT

#44

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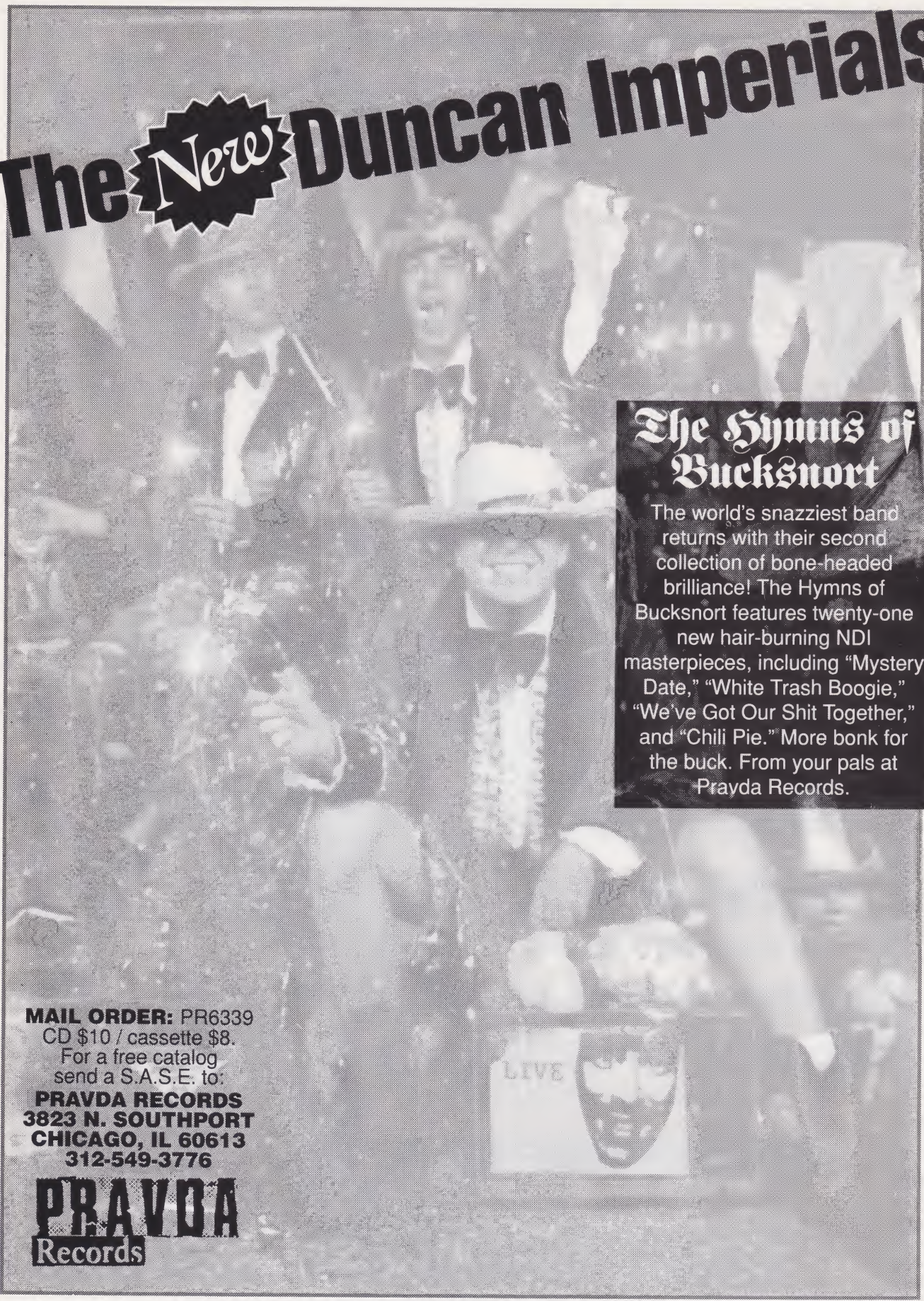
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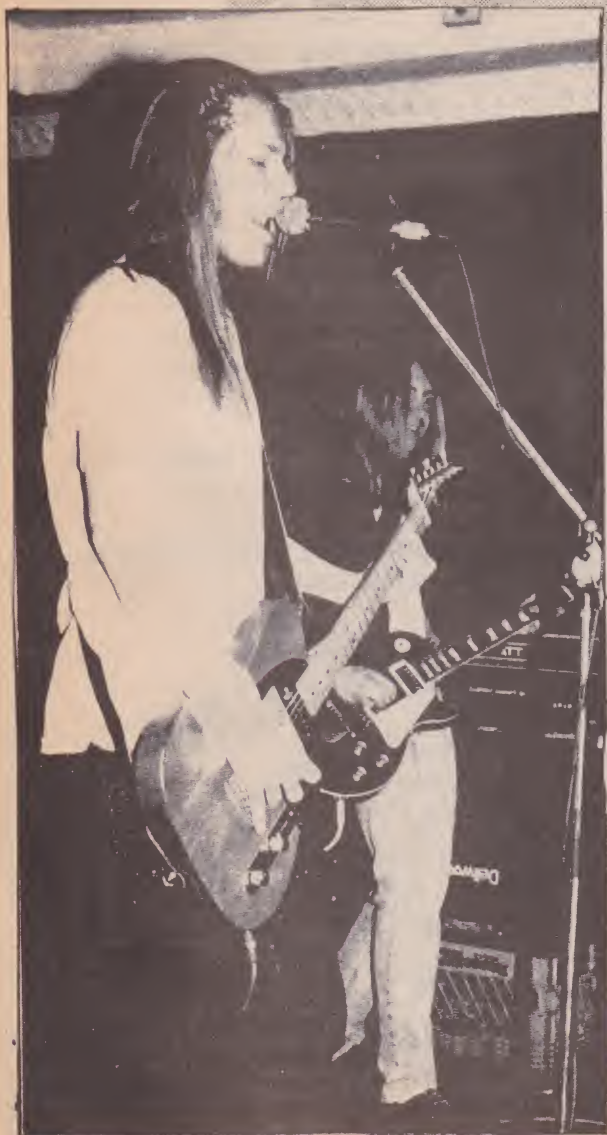
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JERSEY BEAT

ISSUE #44

FALL/WINTER 1991



REVIEWING POLICY

While it's physically impossible for us to review every item received, we do try and listen to everything, and our trained triage team then tries to cull the merely horrible from the truly unlistenable and assign it to the appropriate staffer. Priority goes to music from local bands ("local" meaning anything within a three-state radius of Weehawken, more or less). Please note that we will not review music received on cassette if it is available in another format; band demos and cassette-only releases are reviewed on a regular basis and we welcome their submission. Anyone sending material which is reviewed receives a complimentary copy of the issue in which their review appears, so you don't have to send postage or pay for an issue in advance.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO PUBLICISTS: This is a fanzine. Nobody here gets a paycheck to do this. If you want to call and invite us to a show or buy an ad or just chat about music, fine. **BUT DON'T CALL TO ASK IF WE ARE GOING TO REVIEW YOUR RECORD.** This is how it works: You send us stuff; if we review it, you'll get a copy of the review. Period. If you can't live with that, take us off your mailing list.

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JERSEY BEAT

A funny thing happened while we were putting together our last issue. With 68 pages to fill, I didn't think there would be any problem reviewing everything we wanted to cover... But after 67 pages were filled up, I took a look and realized there were still a few 7-inches we hadn't gotten to. Well, let me rephrase that -- a few DOZEN 7-inches we hadn't gotten to.

Obviously, something was going on. Ask anyone in the punk rock scene and they'll tell you -- the single is going through a renaissance right now unseen since the glory days of Punk Rock back in the late 70's, when indie labels like Stiff and Ork competed with the majors to see who could come up with the coolest picture sleeves and the best cuts.

Nowadays, of course, most of the major labels don't even bother with singles anymore -- it's those horrible 3-inch CD's or CD-5's or, ugh, "cassingles." But at the grassroots level, from do-it-yourself basement bands to well-established labels like Dionysus and Skyclad, singles are still going steady. Herewith, then, our special report on the future of the Seven Inch. Hope you find it interesting.

The other big news this past summer, of course, was the Lollapalooza Festival. Since we've already interviewed Nine Inch Nails and Perry Farrell wouldn't return our phone calls, we decided the next best thing would be an interview with Mr. Lonely himself, Henry Rollins. (Actually, Henry was our first choice all along.) Anyway, we think you'll find an interesting portrait of Mr. Rollins emerging from Johnny Puke's interview, one that may change your image of Rollins as all muscle, sweat and tattoos to an appreciation of a man who may be punk rock's most literate star.

Finally, of course, there's the usual shitload of reviews -- more than usual, and we're only reviewing about a third of what actually comes in the mail. How you guys out there keep up with so many new records (and how the labels who keep churning this stuff out expect you to) is beyond me.

A special thanks to our advertisers, who came through for us in a big way and helped make this nice glossy cover possible for a second issue in a row. For everybody back to school, study hard...remember, you wanna get a real job when you graduate and not wind up a janitor or a fanzine editor the rest of your life. Don't take any year.

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Special thanks to Welsh artist Gary Welton for our new column logos.



- Jim Testa

NEWS, LIES, COMMENTARY AND RUMORS

from the editor's desk

If we look a bit different this issue, it's because we've changed typefaces - from stuffy old Times Roman to a spiffy new sans-serif font, Univers. It's supposed to look cleaner and more modern. One of those tricky subliminal things we media moguls pull to make you think we're smarter than you are. Yeah, right. So like Uncle Walter used to say, here now the news...

Despite what you might have read in Maximum Rock n Roll (way to go, McPheeters), Maxwell's - the world's coolest rock club - has not been sold to Benigan's and, we're happy to report, isn't in danger of closing imminently anymore. Co-owner Steve Fallon was able to buy out his disgruntled partners so the place will stay just the way it is... although they might have to raise the prices a bit to pay off that hefty new mortgage.

Speaking of Hoboken, new residents there include Muddy Mike Young of Forefront Records, who'll soon be releasing records by The Fiendz (see our interview in this issue for more details on that one) and New Hampshire's A.G.'s. That one will be called Circus Bezerkus and, having heard an advance demo, should be a winner. You'd think Sam Shiffman was living in Hoboken too, considering how often he's been spotted chowing down at Maxwell's, but it's just his main squeeze who's living in the Mile Square City.

Gold Coast, the newspaper for which I was writing a local rock column, went out of business, alas.

As we write this, there are still some questions about the future of ABC No Rio (and the Saturday hardcore matinees there), including the legal disposition of the building itself. But for the time being, the Saturday shows should be resuming in October (they took September off to do a little remodeling). The ABC NR crew decided against trying to dismantle some of those annoying posts that currently run right through the stage, just on the odd chance that one of them was holding up the building. There's also talk of starting an ABC No Rio Collective record store in the area.

The question I'm asked most frequently - and which usually elicits a dumbstruck response of "duh" - is "what have you been listening to lately?" Lately, I've been listening to some CD reissues, if you really want to know. Although we don't review this sort of stuff as a rule, I'll mention that Sire has released "All The & More, Part II," the second CD compilation of the Ramones

lp's; this one gives you the boys' third and fourth (and arguably best, although purists prefer one and two) albums, Road To Ruin and Rocket To Russia. It is a merry fanzine editor indeed who bops down the street to the tune of "Sheena Is A Punk Rocker" blaring from his Walkman. Another CD guaranteed to lift my oft-sagging spirits is "The Best Of Van Morrison," on Mercury. Even if there are a few too many songs from the more-recent lackluster albums, the album's sequencing jumps from era to era with woolly abandon (from "Bright Side Of The Road," the CD timewarps back to Them's "Gloria," then fast-forwards to "Moondance," and so on). But where's "Caravan?"

Dutch East has put most (if not all) of its eggs into the basket of goodies known as the John Peel Sessions. For the uninformed, John Peel is (and has been for decades) the BBC's top deejay, who brings bands into his studio for live on-the-air recording sessions. The Dutch East deal means the label will release every Peel Session on CD in this country, a humongous task and one with iffy commercial potential at best; while I went out and bought the Buzzcocks and Wire sessions, the first three CD's I got as promos were Kevin Coyne, The Soft Machine, and Tim Buckley, music so marginal that only diehard fans of those artists could be expected to shell out sixteen big ones for them.

Just arriving in the mail as this issue went to press were a four-song CD by The Jam (recorded before they had released their first single; fascinating, but it's still only four tracks) and the New Fast Automatic Daffodils, which should interest dance music trendies. I still can't help but think Dutch East is investing a shitload of money in product that isn't going to move very fast; this is nice back catalog stuff, but not the sort of thing I'd count on to keep my label solvent in such a soft market.

It should be noted that Twin/Tone -- still rebounding from the devastating bankruptcy of their previous distributor, Rough Trade -- just signed an exclusive distribution deal with - you guessed it -- Dutch East.

Till next time, hoping all your Peel Sessions are full-length CD's...

- Jim Testa

Letter From Minneapolis

By Jim DeRogatis



For Christ's sake, if this music doesn't matter enough for us to argue about it, why the hell have we devoted our lives to it?

That's how I wrote the line for a column in the Minneapolis fanzine "Cake," but this is how it ran: For Christ's sake, if this music doesn't matter enough for us to argue about it, why the hell have we who write about it devoted our lives to it?

My esteemed editor Ann changed it innocuously enough, probably reasoning that I was lapsing into hyperbole again (hey, it happens). But that all-inclusive "we" is exactly what I meant.

Y'see, I assume that all of you reading this -- record store clerks, bands and everyone in their circles, club staffers, writers, industry types, dj's, and that increasingly rare species known as "the fan" who has no greater connection to "the scene" than buying an lbum or two and catching a show once a week -- are as obsessed with rock 'n' roll as I am. We get up in the morning and turn up the stereo, and it's still playing when we crash at night. We buy albums, often at the expense of a helluva lot more practical things, and go to shows in ugly, sweaty holes, often at the expense of a helluva lot more sensible endeavors. We play it, we think about it, we about it in esoteric journals like Jersey Beat. We LIVE it.

Rock 'n' roll is an attitude, a way of living your life. It seems weird to have to define it, especially in these pages. But an amazing number of people these days think about it only in terms of handy, artificial labels, whether they're as broad as "rap" and "heavy metal" and "alternative rock" or as narrow as "acid-drenched psychedelic jangle-pop" and "Sub-Pop-influenced metallic grungecore" or, I don't know, look at the record reviews for some more examples. We can make an infinite number of distinctions about style and worth, but the essence of all great rock 'n' roll is the same. It's the sneer on Jerry Lee Lewis' lips when he kicks over the piano bench; the dangerous, seductive look in Mick Jagger's eyes when he shakes the maracas on the Sullivan show; the fuck-me, fuck-you stance of Patti Smith; the stupid genius smirk on Bob Stinson's face back when he wore the dress. It's the jolt you get when you listen to Bo Diddley's "Hush Your Mouth," the Stooges' "1969," and Public Enemy's "Fight The Power" (same beat, same adrenalin rush). It's feeling less alone when you hear the Velvet Underground's "Pale Blue Eyes" or Big Star's "Holocaust" or Wire's "Used To" or Husker Du's "Hardly Getting Over It." It's stupid, it's smart, it's political, it's trivial, it's art, it's crap, it's made by real human beings who are every bit as fucked up as you so it only goes to reason that you could do it too.

Maybe it's because this music is so important to each of us individually that we've lost sight of the bigger picture. Punk failed in the late 70's to invigorate and redefine rock 'n' roll as the Stones and Beatles had in the '60's. Instead of capturing the imagination of a generation, it spawned the collegiate, safe 'n' cozy, womb-like underground/alternative scene of the '80's, with its varied, disparate camps of devotees, each with their own bands, fanzines, codes of behavior, and narrow-minded views of the world.

Suddenly it was wrong to slam blatant posers on stage or criticize the tiredest, most uninspired crap put out by some vanity-press indie label because, "hey, man, you gotta support the scene." And the goal of many of these indie labels, college deejays, and underground bands? The same as everybody else's in the Reagan era: To succeed, to get signed to a major label, to MAKE MONEY.

What exactly was this supposed to be an alternative to -- except the truth?

Face it: Rock 'n' roll matters less to people today than ever before in its 40-year history. You know the scoop: The dearth of rock albums on the Billboard charts, the death of the bestindie labels, the shrinking club scene, the state of radio, MTV, teenagers who'd rather play Nintendo and listen to Vanilla Ice, "Just Say No," good bands who can't make money touring anywhere but Europe, and a complete lack at any attempt to think through what all of this means in the rock press, glossy rags and fanzines alike.

In my more cynical moments, I fear the worst: Maybe everything has been done and there is nothing original left to do with two guitars, bass, and drums. Maybe the 60's were an aberration and rock 'n' roll never had the power to inspire social change. Maybe nobody cares that Guns N Roses and N.W.A. are hateful, racist, sexist creeps because their fans are all hateful, racist, sexist creeps too. Maybe people don't give a fuck about music that challenges them emotionally and intellectually as well as physically; maybe they just want to be ENTERTAINED and turn off their brains and make a decent living and vote for George Butch again and not make waves and then die and make room for some more good citizens. Maybe art is dead and writing is dead and poetry is dead and rock 'n' roll is dead and in the future, everyone will listen to the same bland corporate crap. But hey, we'll have the Cable Shopping Network and the great god Media to worship, so what else could we want?



This is the point where I'm supposed to deliver a punch line and some inspiring words to the effect of "Don't worry, everything will be all right - Monster Zero or Superball 63 or Walt Mink (these are the current Minneapolis faves, you can substitute your own) is gonna show everyone what it means to WROCK again!" But we all know that's a crock. I haven't got the answers, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't ask the questions, and it doesn't mean I'm a cynic. I still believe it's possible for someone to play rock 'n' roll so powerful it will change my life. It may be something so radically new that I can't even envision it, or it may be a re-stating of all that's been done before. This belief has no basis in fact besides the feeling I get when I listen to the first Ramones album, every damn time. Like I said before, if you're reading this, you probably believe too. So that's something. It only takes a handful of people and a good idea.

COWBOY TEA SHOW COMPILATION Vol. II - All four tunes on this 10-inch comp are fairly rockin' in a classic rock sense, with lots of power chords and lower string fuckery being utilized, along with the "hey, hey, all right!" vocal style sure to turn any dull, old get-together into a pot-smoking, beer-swilling rock 'n roll party. 3 Car Garage and Eyeball Birds spit out the most appealing tracks for me, if only because they don't have the annoying Doors-esque grindy organ of Third Eye, or the lame-ass repetitive drumming of Big Trouble House, who suffer from a really bad band name (as do all the other bands on this comp). All these band names sound like the sort of thing you'd find opening up for a Led Zep/ZZ Top/Winger tribute band at a 10-year high school reunion. Still, all the cuts have good clean production, although listening to this whole thing in one sitting makes me want to go out and do something wild, like smoke a cigarette or something. (Rocket Sound, PO Box 40397, St Paul, MN 55104)

From the musclebound, microcephalic looks of the pictures on the back cover of SHUTDOWN's 7-inch, I expected this to be: hard-to-the-bone jock moshcore (an expectation only heightened by an band name ending in -down, ala' Breakdown, Krakdown, etc.) But instead, this turned out to be ok melodic crossover stuff with throat-full-of-phlegm vocals. And one of the guys even plays a weird instrument called a "bace," sez here. (Chikara, PO Box 65331 Stn F, Vancouver BC CANADA V5N 5P3)

Some guys from the Butthole Surfers, Scratch Acid and Waste King Universal get together and prove to the world just how weird, wild, and wacky they are on DADDY LONGHORN's completely disjointed, chaotic, and cool record. The guitar wanking literally knows no end thru the whole album, though it's backed up by some pretty pounding bass and occasional fiddling, harmonica-ing, and distant-sounding, distorted vocals ala' those crazy Buttholes. (Touch & Go, PO Box 25520, Chicago IL 60625)

STUPID AMERICANZ - "Lost Cause" EP

House O'Pain, PO Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212

I can almost feel sorry for these guys for several reasons: 1) they can't spell; 2) they not only are stupid, but proud of it as well; and 3) they're the type of band that simply no one likes. You'll never see a Stupid Americanz Fan Club nor anyone wearing a Stupid Americanz t shirt nor any big-chested nymphette white trash love dolls waving giant "We Luv Stupid Americanz" banners made out of bed sheets and magic markets at the airport. In fact, I can't even picture anyone even picking this up at a record store, saying "Hey, Stupid Americanz, looks pretty cool" and paying three bucks for it. If you did buy it, you'd find out that not only can't they spell, but they play bad fast hardcore with wanky guitar sound, production-in-a-can, and horrible lyrics sung with high-pitched vocals.

STAND UP - "That's Real" EP

Tragic Life, PO Box 060623, Staten Island NY 10306

The positive band from Lancaster, PA, crawls out of the corn rows and into your heart on these three tunes, guaranteed to get your little Amish self pogoing through the potato patch and moshing it up with the Mennonites. Actually, only some of this makes for adequate mosh fodder as the majority is fast-paced with the requisite in-need-of-Ritalin hyperactive drumming and the kid everyone in class used to call "Squeaky" on vocals. All this makes Stand Up fall into the happy-go-posi category of hardcore band, along the lines of Gorilla Biscuits and other "let's mosh together and feel all right" bands with their bouncy bass lines and smiley face lyrics. As distinct from the gothic SE bands like Judge, with their rough'n'ready for action attitude and haunted house reverb'd vocals. (And then there is the letter jacket-wearing duh-ness of bands like Slapshot and the plain laugh-out-loud ridiculousness of Integrity and other axe-to-the-beerdrinker bands whose vision of a soy milk-drinking, bench-pressing nation of

MY VINYL

By **MATT SHAWKEY**



shaven-headed illiterate lacrosse players is enough to convince me that (a) straight edge is on the fast decline and (b) hardcore is composed of the same dumb jocks who used to extort Snicker bars out of me in the locker room, only now they're wearing "Go Vegan!" instead of "Co-Ed Naked Lacrosse" t-shirts. Overall, Stand Up are nothing special or different but at least they put something other than a picture of their guitarist leaping high into the air or the singer pointing his finger and giving fellatio to the mike on the pic sleeve.

SURGEON GENERAL: Needle's In A Pig's Ass

Headache, 53 Myrtle St, Midland Pk NJ 07432

As I gave lovingly onto the cover of this vinyl discus, I can not help but wonder at the lads; what wellspring of genius could they have drunk from, what muse of brilliance could they have invoked to produce such poetic, poignant, yet to-the-point lyrics as this: "It's so easy to berage/those who are less fortunate/it's not really nice to laugh/but it's okay if you really hate them." These modern day Confuciuses not only give Fugazi and other masturbatorically poetic bands a run for their money, they make such washed-up has-been as Buddha, Mohammed and Jesus himself seem more like geriatric old farts in wheelchairs spouting gibberish advise like "Dream a little dream, and ream a little ream, but never let a motherfucker shit in your wild oats" in between swigs of Night Train and hits from their IV bags, rather than any civilization-changing prophets. "Never wash a rented car," "Every snake needs a pit to hiss in," and "Never referee a cocaine war" are but a few of the aphorisms offered up for your puzzlement on this worth-its-weight-in-brain power disc. After you're done thoroughly digesting those cerebrum-teasing lyrics, you can sit back and enjoy the basic, pretty decent three-chord chug-a-chug punk these boys crank out as background noise.

WIMP FACTOR 14 - "Train Song"/"I'll Send You A Postcard"

Harriet, PO Box 649, Cambridge MA 02238

WF14 bring cover art to brilliant new lows with what appears to be a piece of blue paper splattered with tar and a piece of freshly melted copper stuck right in the middle like some hideous blemish on the ass of an Exxon Valdez-reamed Old Man Sea. It could pass for abstract art, it could be the cover of Rorschach's next album, it could be a bunch of stoned highway construction workers running into some Symbianese Liberation Front fanatics waving blue placards in symbolic memory of the blue panties so vigorously soused by Patty Hearst's urine during her kidnapping, or it could be a bunch of dark, tarry bowel movements that bubbled out of that obese cockrocker Meatloaf's bloated ass like a Bat Out Of Hell. Whatever it

is, it's a brilliant cover, and is almost not fitting for the music contained within - a fairly wimpy yet punk and fun-catchy-'charming' deal with cool lyrics about trains one side and some weird sentimental thing on the other. Another thing is that the music on the A side even sounds like train, matching the lyrics to a T crossing. My only complaint is that there's no mention of out-on-his-ass tv star Gary Coleman's erstwhile obsession with those sleek, hard, honk phallic machines. Pretty cool.

BLOODHOUND GANG - 7"

THD, 2020 Seabury Ave, Minneapolis MN 55406

The overall cuteness of everything contained in this 7" package, from the Electric Company-inspired name to the "goofy" cover art to the "stand-ins for Jordan, Donnie and Joe while they're out on drug, arson, and underage blowjob reception trials" band members, to the happy, pick-me-up rock nature of the music, makes me sick beyond mention. But I like the first song.

THE GRIFTERS - "The Kingdom Of Jones"

Doink, 1572 Overton Pk #11, Memphis TN 38112

"Pop sensibilities" is the phrase that pops into my head as I listen to this 7 inch, even though I don't have the slightest clue what the hell "pop sensibilities" are, or even what "pop" is in the first place, besides being the stuff that people who read Tiger Beat rub their pre-pubescent crotches over. In any case, this band seems pretty intent on getting signed to K Records, as evidenced by their acoustic rock/"quirky" leanings and introspective lyrics and such. The big problem with these songs is that they go from acoustic to electric to both randomly and with no real direction, making it all sound both unstructured and too "busy." And plus, the reverb coated vocals and oh-so-deep lyrics just suck.

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BIG DRILL CAR SKIN YARD



"BATCH"

BIG DRILL CAR is a muscle machine zoomin' head-on into a hairpin turn. On their third release, BATCH, this So Cal quartet spinout hard hooks and bone breakin' beats. BIG DRILL CAR slams, screeches and cranks on every cylinder with a lean mix of pop and rock that explodes on contact. Frank Dahy's voice snarls atop the shattering rhythms pummeled out by Bob Thomson (bass) and Danny Marcroft (drums) while Mark Arnold's guitaroverdrive heads for a land speed record. Produced by Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton of ALL. CRZ 018 (LP/CA/CD). ALSO AVAILABLE: ALBUM/TAPE/CD TYPE THING (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 008; SMALL BLOCK (EP/CA EP/CD EP) CRZ 014; "Surrender/Getaway" (Split 7" SINGL w/CHEMICAL PEOPLE) CRZ 701.



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TONYALL



"NEW GIRL, OLD STORY"

NEW GIRL, OLD STORY is a new album of tunes played by some old friends. Tony Lombardo, the original bass dude from the DESCENDENTS, is the Tony in TONYALL. Tony's friends (Bill Stevenson, Karl Alvarez, Stephen Egerton and Scott Reynolds of ALL) are the ALL part of TONYALL. ALL back up TONY on these twelve indelibly stamped Tony type tunes that he wrote over the past decade. Tony shares the vocals with Scott and Karl on this collection of songs about girls not doin' what you'd think they'd be doin' and doin' what you wouldn't think they'd be doin'. CRZ 016 (LP/CA/CD).

ALL ALLROY SEZ... (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 001; "JUST PERFECT" (12" SINGL) CRZ 003; ALLROY FOR PREZ (MINI LP/MINI CA/CD EP) CRZ 004; "SHE'S MY EX" (12" SINGL/CA LP) CRZ 005; ALLROY'S REVENGE (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 006; TRAILBLAZER (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 010; ALLROY SAVES (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 011

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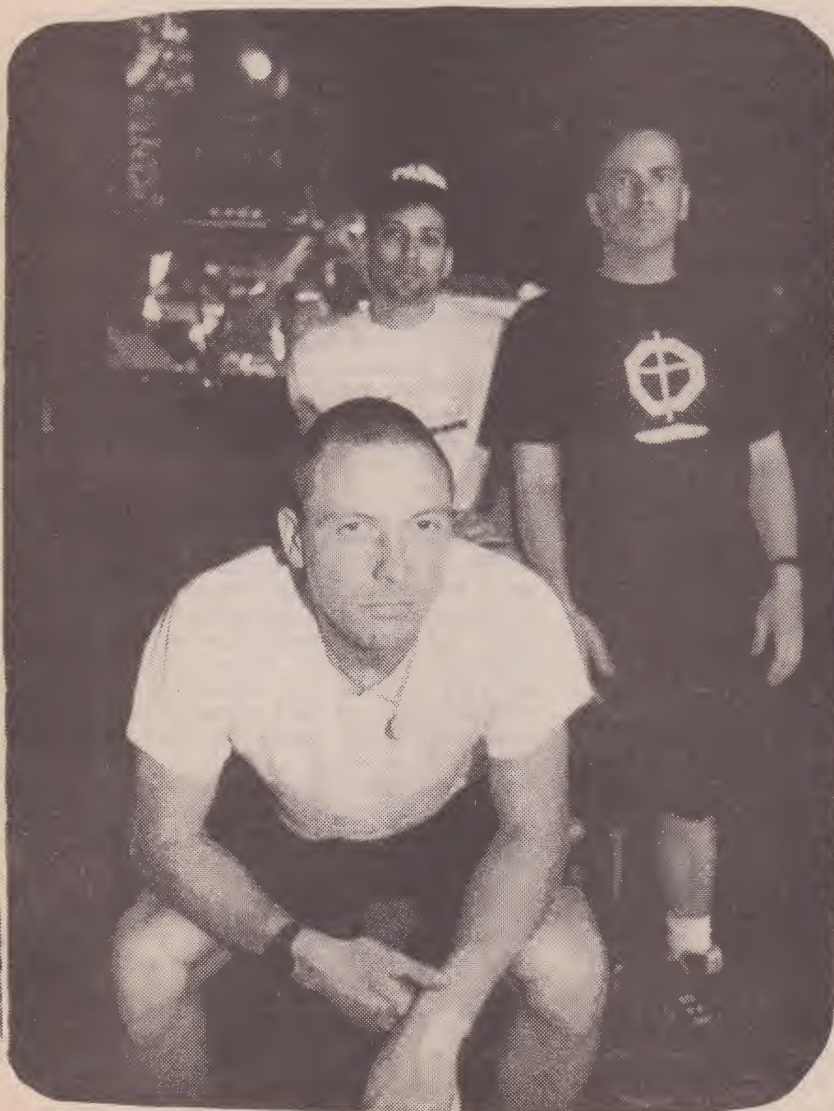
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What is now happening to the Industrial "doctrine," if you will, has in the course of history often happened to the doctrines of other musical revolutions. The thinkers and leaders have become outmoded, moved on, or just become plain spoiled. At the present time, the opportunists within this movement obliterate and distort the revolutionary side of Industrial and conform to the mainstream. In such circumstances, we must praise the pure and expose the wretched! So much for the thrash and pop-rock sounds of Ministry and Nine Inch Nails. So much for the Depeche Mode twang adopted on the latest Nitzer Ebb "product." "Family Man"... Bah! Humbug! Here we have, exposed in all its clearness, the basic problem in Industry. We must look towards TRUE industrial thinkers, the likes of: Die Krupps, Kode IV, Die Warzau, Manufacture and others... I would be so bold to say, KLF are following a more Industrial path than newer Ministry. And while Skinny Puppy DO remain "pure," their last album was just soooo disappointing, as was the "house" adaptation of Thrill Kill Kult. On the "old school" tip, Sharkbait are a fairly safe bet, ala' Neubauten. As to answer that decade-long question, YES, it's the "pure" beginnings of Industrial, but we have to speak to the evolution of, and current applications of, Industry. Not the cling-clang origins that are still, YES, the basics of all this. And so much for the anti-TECHNO element. You know what you are! This being stated, lettuce move forward with the latest crop:



by Michael Hale



CONSOLIDATED

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR



CONSOLIDATED - "Friendly Fascism" CD (Netzwerk)

This lp is quite a bit better than the "Brutal EQ" single. Unfortunately, the CD starts off with the new trend of cursing, no thanks to DJ Zero - although what's said is important, why blow it? Free speech isn't about "motherfucker," right? So let's all drop to the 2 Live Crew level while we're at it! Anyways, things still look bleak with "Brutal EQ" up next - BUT then whoah! "Our Leader" exposes Bush for all he's worth: from refusing the civil rights bill, declaring war on Martin Luther "Peace" King's birthday, and now, the conservative Thomas nomination -- HA! he's (Bush) subtly everything this brilliant tape-edit implies, and boy does it make Young Republicans cringe, which is always nice. "Unity of Oppression" SHOULD HAVE been the 1st single, at least it's a new one. In this infectious groove, Adam the singer tackles all the ills of society left out on their last lp: Anti-Semitism, homophobia, animal exploitation, and some of the contradictions of SOME rap (yes, I'm generalizing here), dissing women, Jews, Whites, etc., while condemning Racism (?); a;; the sexist lyrical terrorists with gold peace signs around their necks -- What's Goin ON? "Dominion" puts the Bible back in its place (away in a motel drawer), AMEN! And the title track, "Friendly Fascism," has a multi-issue agenda that reminds me of a conversation I overheard between two clerks while this record was playing: "How can these guys make a whole record about eating meat when there's so many other problems like homelessness...it's ridiculous," and I'm thinking, he's ridiculous. Not only is this NOT a one-dimensional record - and even if it was -- the razing (land, water, waste, rainforest, pollution, consumption of space) and murdering (violence breeds violence, violence, that's v-i-o-l-e-n-c-e) of animals does WAY more harm and is at the root of more EVIL than ANY other "ill" so stick that on your BIG\$MAC and eat it, fool.

Oh, now that I've gone way off the lp review (which I tend to do), suffice it to say it's a worthy purchase -- it's packed with listenable Industro-Rap (ala P.E.) and information that's appreciated and much needed. Consolidated, thank you.

DAS KODE IV - "Scratch Attack" Remix 12" (KK/Cargo)

Resembling the LP version -- NOT! I thought it was a different song. "Scratch Attack" is a kickin' techno groove with a house-ish bass line (courtesy of Final Cut, uh huh) even! What an improvement over the album mix. And yes, there's a vocal on it too, the one complaint I had with the "Possessed" lp (also on KK). It's one of those TTK distorto-fx vocal trax that's all the rage these days, and it works just fine. The "Fade To Black" mix is the one you want, as the "DJ" mix has little if no low end and the "Madness" mix is basically the lp version. There's also a "Possessed" remix on here that's definitely X rated for its additional sample full of sexual profanity. WHAT were they thinking?

CYBERAKTIF "Tenebrae Vision" CD (WaxTrax)

This is not only the perfect combination of Front Line Assembly and Skinny Puppy (which it is: Literally!), BUT it's more... Out go all the pseudo-Metal tinkering of the newer Puppy material and in comes an interesting, layered and listenable backdrop for Bill (Frontline) Leeb's excellently disturbed vocal growls. Which is to say, "Tenebrae Vision" is more like "Vivi Sect"-era Puppy than any other project these three have been involved with. Kudos to Cevin Key & D. Rudolph Goettel who fare nicely without the presence of Nivek Ogre. The single "Nothing Stays" is included in all its glory. This is perhaps the best, er, "goth" industrial song ever, and it's even got an almost singalong chorus! "Paradiessiets" is also a standout cut, with backup vocals ala' "The Exorcist." "Dis Course Illusion" has that KMFDM guitar thing going, while "Temper," the first single, is more Nitzer Ebb-Meets-TKK-in-Hell than anything else. An excellent LP, this. The best from WaxTrax in eons, buy it!

RAZOR "Face Of Fear"/"Give A Sign" 12-inch (Marz)

Altho it was recorded in Miami, this single does have a certain Euro sound to it. But something about it just rubs the wrong way, and with a RAZOR, that hurts! Maybe it's the Yazz riff, maybe the drab production, don't know. "Face Of Fear" is definitely dance music, but the "extended" isn't as good as the "broadcast" version and that's too short! "Give Me A Sign," with more samples, is interesting but less "danse." A problem here is the level, or flat, production; parts or riffs that should GRAB or JUMP outta the mix just sorta, well, happen. The extended version of this one's a bit better but still lacks the dynamics that separate the ok from the great. (2602 NW 5th, Miami FL 33127)

MACHINES OF LOVING GRACE "Rite of Shiva" CD single (Mammoth)

Musically, this CD single is great; cool techno programming, samples, and production. It suffers from perhaps being TOO diverse. The "sung" vocals give it that Nine Inch Nails "it's not industrial, it's Pseudo-Electric-Pop-Rock" drawback. Which is not to say, esp. with a band name like Machines Of Loving Grace, one need be Industrial to be of any worth. But it seems Industrial is the nearest direction in which these Machines aim.

Of the three mixes of "Shiva," the "Guru" mix is the only one to gain the advantage of Lack of Unnecessary Chorus Award, weird but that's the weakest part of the track, the cheesy chorus - the verse is much heavier. The non-lp "All I Really Need" is better. It's sample-heavy Greater Than One-styled danse with a twist. Get this: the chorus goes "All I really need is your love..." followed each time by these Karen Finley samples: Asshole, Cocksucker, Scumbag! It's a great contrast with the call & response approach that gives new meaning to the thin line between the love&hate concept. And it's hilarious!

LIFE IN SODOM "The Stains" 12 inch (Nutrix)

A gothic danse tone to this one. Out of Florida comes Life In Sodom, a 3-year project of poet Gerrie Brand. This, their first single, is slightly reminiscent of A Split Second. It's got that Euro-Beat dark sound, with higher, more traditional vocals., like all those CBGB Audition Night teen bands influenced heavily by Bauhaus. Worth a listen. (36 NE 1st St #504, Miami FL 33132)

**IF IT MOVES...presents TORTURE TECH OVERDRIVE
Compilation lp (If It Moves)**

Here's the long-awaited industrial danse comp brought to you by San Diego's infamous Chase. It's a good representation of what's going on in the industrial American underground today. The biggest drawback, however, is the lack of non-Californian talent. The biggest plus is the inclusion of Biohazard, a group whose name I've been hearing for years now but have never heard. Biohazard definitely rise above the other bands included; they'd be a match for Nitzer Ebb's better material. There are other reasons to check this out, such as Scar Tissue, whose take on Front Line styled danse is quite good. Or Xorcist, whose "So Big" gives a good, moody, eerie sound. And A Release Project's cut is great, ala AAK! (4545 Contour Blvd, San Diego CA 92115).

CAT RAPES DOG "Banzai Beats" CD (KK/Cargo)

Back for more industrial bashing are our Swede Pretty Boys, Cat Rapes Dog. This group, as much as I love 'em, just crack me the heck up! They're almost like an Industrial caricature. It's like Laibach on Top Of The Pops, that good. The CD begins with "Samaritan," which owns the refreshing vocal refrain of "As long as there is hope/there is life," and the more typical, "There seems to be no cure for you." The musical approach seems a bit more accessible although the vocals remain embedded in the absurd growl. "Open Your Mind"

most resembles the previous release, "God Guns & Gasoline," while "Rakna Inte Med Mig" starts out like TOTAL house until the vocal growl dissolves into total contradiction. It's what's meant by innovative, I guess.

SWAINS "Device For Your Soul" CD (KK)

PSYCHICK WARRIORS OV GAIA "Menead" CD (KK)

Like the press release for the Swains says, "Dancing to the Swains is like painting a bad picture..." and, I add, stupid. Or, "Stoopid, boyee!" The Warriors, however, 'ave got themselves another smash hit with "Menead" (the Greek goddess ov fertility, dont'cha know?) Hot on the heels ov their US tour, this release (their second) combines the techno element ov the first 12" while adding a Middle Eastern flair. You might say +8 with a touch of curry.

VOICE OF GOD "Blood & Family" cassette (Church Of The Voice)

The Voice of God make guitar-driven drum-machine punk-rock that's heavy enough on the aggression side to scream "Crossover." The tape would win over both the Punk and Industrial audience with its combination of guitar riff heavy Rock song structure and "modern" technology - via the drum machine programs and occasional sample. Vocals along the lines of NIN, but harder and better. If Trent came from a hardcore background and not a pop one, maybe. "Burning," the most atypical song, sounds like what Ministry is TRYING to do, with the Agro-guitar/sample, UP-beat, thrashy thing goin full speed ahead. I like the fadeout vocal refrain of "kill me, kill me..." The title track goes back for the syncopated bump & grind feel, sorta reminds me of Big Black, but cleaner with better production. And speaking of production, this cassette scores points for its PRO excellent packaging. "Do not be afraid to stand up and question/you do no stand alone," from the insert. (PO Box 1504, St Louis MO 63022)

BELLES ARTES "Azul" cassette (All)

Goth is alive & well, as displayed by this offering from Belles Artes. The sound goes the way of your basic 3-piece plus vocalist (ala Bauhaus?). There's hi-quality graphics and packaging. Sounds great, right? Well, it's ok, but suffers from the trade off vocals, just when you get used to the male vocals, BOOM! in come the female vocals. It's like a Bauhaus /Cocteau Twins compilation or something.

DANSE ASSEMBLY TOTALLY TOP TWELVE!!!

1. T-99 "Anastasia"
2. Cubick 22 "Night In Motion"
3. KODE IV "Scratch Attack"
4. BI GOD 20 "Carpe Diem" Remix
5. DEPECHE MODE "Strangelove" Hijack Mix
6. NITZER EBB "Showtime Remixes" (off lp)
7. THE PRODEGY "Charley Says"
8. KLF "What Time Love"/"3 AM"
9. MEAT BEAT "Now"/"H.Skelter"/"PsychOut"
10. QUADROPHENIA "Quadrophenia"
11. SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES "Kiss Them"
12. SHRED "Brain Drain"

And so there we have it, kids. Another issue, another column. HI and thanks to: Jim, Crocodile Shop, Roxy-Rob, Nick, Gary, Jessica and THE main Ajewa, Chris, Spike at Planet X, DV8 (good luck in NYC), the KK crew, Fusion, all Danse Assembly supporters (you know what u r), and last but not least, Tinman, for putting up with the CS noize! If you'd like to send any Industrial or Danse produkt for review, send it to me at 100 Montgomery St #1Q, Highland Pk NJ 08904. OR, you can drop it by in person at The Roxy, 95 French St, New Brunswick NJ, on any Thursday or Friday night when I dj (or at Crocodile Shop shows) where I, er, um, put myself 'up' for criticism and reviews. Take Kare, peace & groovy eggplants!



THE SWAINS

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

INNER-VIEW PSYCHICK WARRIORS OF GAIA

by Mick Hale

Being that I, your less than humble & opinionated writer, consider myself a part of the "Modern Generation," you should imagine the excitement I felt meeting and hanging with these Psychick Warriors Ov Gaia. A group of "sound crafters" who, although more akin to "DJ's" than musicians, ARE the true music-makers OV the 90's. After all, it IS the 90's, isn't it? You see, or you are about to, in this decade, there are less egos and more QUALITY in the form of faceless, nameless danse muzak. Sure, there are a few "names" - Joey Beltram springs to mind -- but let's face it, when the Average Joe thinks of "Dance Music," it's probably Madonna, not Cubic 22, or DeeLite and not T-99. Well, that's POP music, and the real dance music of today's underground is rough & hard -- Techno-Bleep, whatever, but it's definitely (and literally) WAY more "progressive" than ANYTHING that's happening in the so-called "Alternative Rock" market. So Be It.

RETURN TO THE SOURCE

When our heroes, the Psychick Warriors Ov Gaia, were mere Infants, it was six years ago. And under that moniker, "The Infants," they were charting more familiar musical waters, along the lines of the Swans or Jesus & Mary Chain. They used overly-distorted guitars, acoustic drums, with a nod towards Neubauten noise. After local gigs (in this case, Holland) they grew into the more industrial "Sluagh Ghairm," in

which metal sheets & pipes were added, as well as the arrival of the all-mighty synth. Reinoudt, the Warrior who contributed the most to this Inner View, suggested this incarnation's sound was along the "Soundscape" tip. Movie Musick?

"Trance Formation, yeah, that's what we're about."

TRANCE FORMATION

And so were borne The Psychick Warriors Ov Gaia. Not unlike their spiritual mentors, Psychic TV, they make instrumental "trance-inducing-tribal-house-music," and then they (being the "sound-crafters" they are) TWIST it for unsuspecting public consumption. And about the admittedly pompous name: "We wanted it to be confusing in length, and you can laugh about its overblown length, but we wanted to escape a 'normal' band name, by being tribal and spiritual." The other members of the Warriors - Robbert, Reinier, and soundman Tim - agree.

[UN]PERFORMANCE, U.S. TOUR '91

Besides their stops in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and NYC, the Warriors landed in New Brunswick. And landed they did, being there was little promotion. The Roxy regulars didn't even realize they were dancing - ripping up the floor - to a "band." Bunched up in the corner by the soundboard, the Warriors manipulated, mixed, and motivated both their pro-programmed drum & keyboard sampler tracks and the dancefloor crowd. The soundcrafter, Reinoudt, remarked after the set, "The audience was great, they were the E-vent, as they should be,"



and then went on to reminisce: "In Holland, we played at The Paradiso, and showed a [gigantic] video of flames and there were all about 20 people on stage dancing and I was behind the crowd in the sound booth, and Robbert and Reiner were not visible thru the dancers." The following day, when the reviews came out, they said: "The [Psychick Warriors'] non-performance was seriously impressive, you dance and you get flames." Very much so.

INFLUENCES AND CONTRADICTIONS

"House music is beautiful, there's no pop song structure anymore, and so there's no labels or ego..." yet the Psychic Temple of Youth Cross appears on both the Warriors' singles. On the "Industrial" tip, Reinoudt didn't spare any expense: "Everybody is like (at which point he adopted a laid-back L.A. accent) Hey, maan, I'm into industrial. And it's just a tag that can't be progressive, so the [industrial] audience is passive when they, in fact, should be the E-vent." SO, what about that Temple of Youth Cross? "It's not a label or a tag. It's a philosophy about the spirituality of freedom. It's working together to get greater things done and sharing information. We hope that people see the Cross and write to the Temple, 'cause we always put the address on there too." Ah, I see. Timothy Leary and Alister Crowley are also "in the Mixx," so to speak, in the form of Tim's "Return...To The Source" spoken word sample and Al's concept of 23 in the name of that very same track, "Title 23."

PSYCHICK WARRIORS

THE FUTURE IS OURS --

"Over all, the people who saw us were great, and into it. But the advertising for each gig was shit," chimed Inge, the Warriors' manager and KK Records ace photog. Although the attendance at each show was sporadic, a few of the "right" people saw them. Like Frank Gianelli. Of Psychic TV, who was in Boston and asked the Warriors to open their U.S. and European tours. This is a good thing. And the recently released "Maenad" does just what its press release promises, in "weaving together eastern ambience with modern technology." It's like listening to deep-techno, while under the hallucinogenic fx of curry! Quite good. And "Beyond" that "Valley" you get a hint of their latest "Detroit" styled sound. Ala' +8 Records. To see the excitement of Reinoudt when at the Roxy soundcheck he exclaimed, "This is our newest song and it's really Detroit!" was a real trip, knowing they're from Holland and what +8 is all about. I guess you had to be there.

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#40 - SOLD OUT

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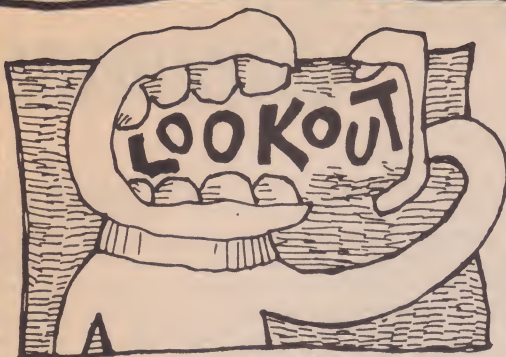
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IN OTHER
UNSKILLED
ARTIST'S
LOOKOUT
AD...

by Johnny Puke

When the Rollins gang asked me if I wanted to be their guest at the much-publicized Lollapalooza Festival, I jumped at the chance; the seven-band line-up sounded like a great day's fun. This was the only tour that made any money in this year's recession-plagued summer, and it offered a chance for me to escape from the isolated island where I live. So on August 17, which happened to be my birthday, I headed for the new Walnut Creek Amphitheater in Raleigh, North Carolina, to catch the 90's version of the US Festival. And grand it was, with the Rollins Band and Ice T both turning in supercharged sets that the other acts could not follow. And life in the stands was exciting as well, running into old pals, imbibing \$3 beers, and almost coming to fisticuffs with an unreasonable black yuppie, supposedly the manager of Living Colour.

After the Rollins Band's set, I had the chance to chat with Mr. Lonely himself, somewhat hindered by the presence of three hacks posing as "journalists" who were ill-prepared to interview an artist as seminal to modern rock and roll as Henry Rollins. The most annoying of these morons, who asked inane questions about Nine Inch Nails and Henry's tattoos, will be referred to in this article as "Some Other Loser," or SOL. The other two writers seemed cowed by the whole experience and rarely spoke; we will call them "Yet Another Loser," or YAL, and "Another Loser," or AL.



Photo by Matt Unjustuh

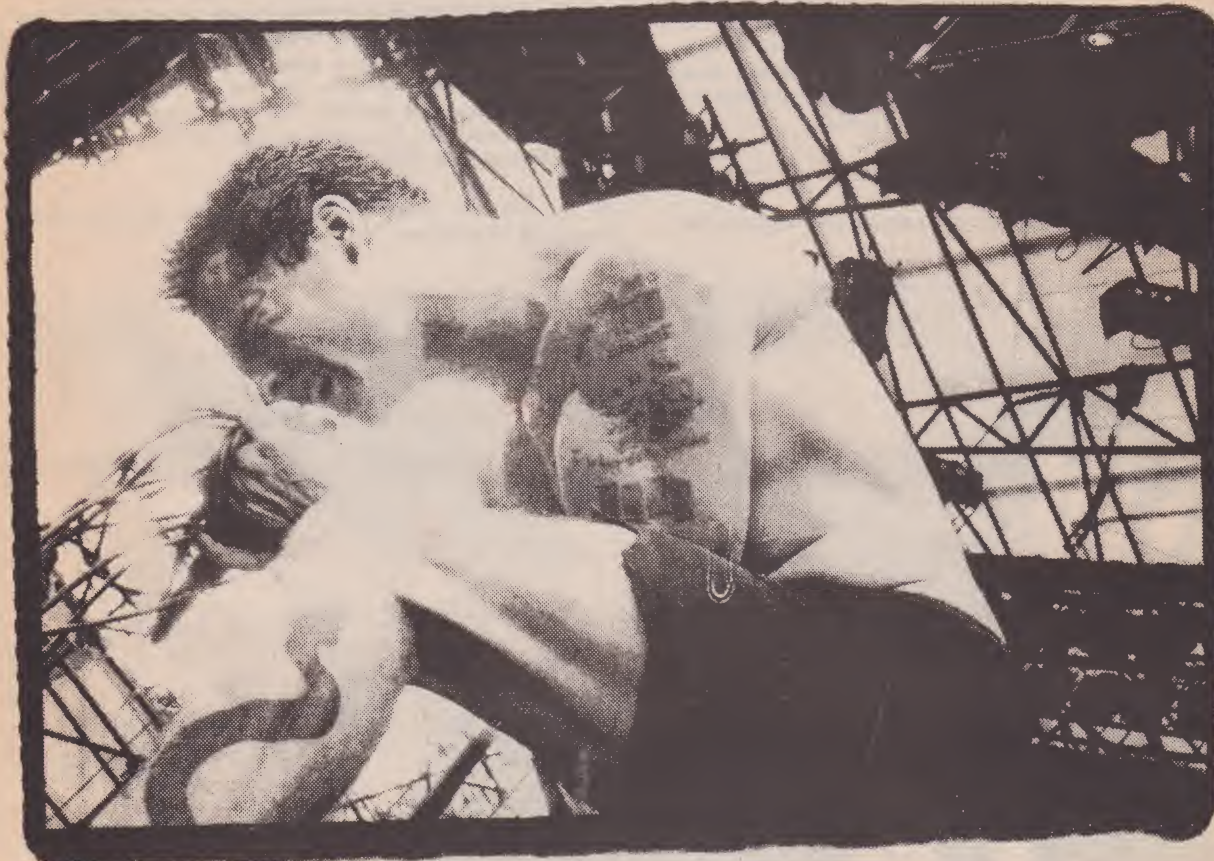


PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

ROLLINS

The Jersey Beat Interview

SOL: What kind of music are you trying to get through with your music?

Rollins: I don't know... It's not like we're telling you to go blow up Bank Of America. Lyrically I write the songs from deep inside; you know, things that I feel. Then we play the music in a very unrestrained and forceful manner. Whatever that message is... I don't know. We're not saying "clean up the environment," although I think people should. We're not saying "Fuck the police," although they should be...murdered.

SOL: That's great for my paper.

Rollins: Yeah. I'll come back here next time and they'll light my hair on fire.

AL: What recollections do you have from your show in Budapest a couple of months back?

Rollins: You mean playing with Einsturzende Neubauten?

AL: Yeah, I have friends who saw you there.

Rollins: Yeah, I've played Budapest four or five times. It was a fun show, the last show of the tour, 12 shows in 12 days. It was our second night playing with Neubauten and it was a lot of fun. I like playing in Budapest. We've had some really good times there. We've been playing there since 1987. It was a good time.

JP: I was curious about what types of compromises you've had to make to be a part of this large tour, as opposed to just doing the Rollins Band individually. For example, the last time we spoke in Pensacola, you were telling me that there was no way in hell you would ever play in South Florida...

Rollins: Yeah...

JP: Can you expand on that and tell us about your experiences with Black Flag there?

Rollins: The last time I played in Orlando and Tampa with Black Flag, we had problems with skinheads. Some of our audience got beat up by skinheads and some of our crew got punched out by skinheads, and we never got a chance to shoot them in the head like they really need. Yeah, a little 9mm therapy right between the ears, put them out of my misery, no problem there. So anyway, I never wanted to go back there, but I think on a tour like this, that element is not going to be there. And if they are there, I don't think they would stand a chance at doing their bullshit with this many people. On a more selfish position, I won't have to deal with it. I would love to play Tampa. I like to play anywhere. But I'm not going to go there and endanger our audience and potentially myself for a bunch of guys who are, you know, racists. Life is short. I don't have time for this bullshit, there's lots of other places I can go to play.

Now as for compromises in playing on this tour as opposed to playing by ourselves, we usually play almost two hours a night when we do our own shows. But hey, we're part of seven bands here and the first four bands on this tour get 45 minutes each. If everyone played for two hours, we couldn't do this. No one would have any ears left anyway. So, I do 45 minutes, Ice T does 45 minutes, Nine Inch Nails gets 45 minutes, I can live with that. The next two bands, Living Colour and Siouxsie, only get an hour, and Jane's Addiction only get an hour and 15 minutes. So it's not as if we're getting our heads cut off. We're all kind of pulling back a little so we can do this thing together and to me, it's okay. I like playing longer. About a week ago, Siouxsie had a sore throat so she dropped out of a few shows and we all got her time. So we all got one hour sets, us and the Butthole Surfers, and we were all just having a great time. We wrote a song together, us and the Buttholes, and we went out and played it like 15 minutes, just jammed. We have Steve and Eric from Jane's Addiction out there, we had Ice T on drums, we had all kinds of people out there, it was great.

JP: So this also gives you the chance to do spontaneous things and collaborate.



Photo by Des, Jr.

Rollins: Yeah, I sang with Ice T the other days, I did three songs with Body Count [Ice T's band], it was great.

SOL: So you've been enjoying the Lollapalooza concerts?

Rollins: Yeah, it's great.

YAL: What about the whole Woodstock idea, everyone comparing this to Woodstock?

Rollins: That doesn't mean anything to me. I'm on stage from 2 to 2:45, then I watch Ice T, go eat lunch, and hang out. Later on I watch Jane's Addiction. Comparing something to Woodstock...I don't know...compare it to an orange. Compare it to a pine tree, I don't care. From 2 o'clock to 2:45, I'm on that motherfucker stage rocking out. Ask Perry about Woodstock.

SOL: Would you compare it to a circus?

Rollins: I compare a lot of rock and roll to a circus because I think a lot of people in rock and roll are clowns. Or lion tamers, or ring leaders.

JP: And which would you consider yourself?

Rollins: Ring leader, Johnny, ring leader! Ringmaster! No, only kidding. I'd be the trapeze guy, like the Wallendas, no net.

SOL: What and why did you start your book company?

Rollins: When? 1984. Why? So I could put out my books. So I could write and put it out. It went okay and now I put out other people's work as well. When I was younger, I read lots of books, mountains of books, but I was reading all the wrong shit. I would read books because I liked reading, I like a good story. But none of the books ever inspired me to do anything until I read a Henry Miller book called Black Spring. It was the first Henry Miller book I ever wrote, er, read. I'm sorry. That book made me want to get up and do things. I said, "wow, a book can really mean something," more than just a Stephen King book. [A King story] might be a scary story and you can get off on reading it, but when I read Black Spring, I said "Wow! I want to get up and scream and jump, I want to make music, I want to write, I want to do things!" It really inspired me. So I started writing very much in earnest. I said, "well, this guy is just kind of throwing it out there. He doesn't seem like any... doesn't seem to be writing some kind of lofty novel. He's just giving it to you right off the street." Which is pretty much all I had going for me. So I said, I'd like to express myself like this, because I found myself writing all the time anyway. So I started writing and I was crass enough to put out a book, and that was 13 years ago.

YAL: What other writers have influenced you artistically?

Rollins: Hmmm.. Hubert Selby. He's a great writer. I think he's America's last great living writer. His most famous book is called Last Exit To Brooklyn, a kind of an underground, really heavy book. It was banned in Europe. He's a tough dude and he wrote four other novels after that and they're just magnificent.

JP: Yeah, like Requiem For A Dream.

Rollins: Yeah! Requiem...which is his last novel, made me stop writing. I said, "Fuck it, I can't write anymore." That's when I had to meet Hubert Selby. I found his number, I called him on the phone and said, "Look, I'm blowing it here. I gotta meet you. Can I come over to your house, get my books signed, and

say hello to you because I just read Requiem...and you're fucking me up. I can't write anymore because it's just too good!" He went, "Yeah, come on over!" He's just this nice old guy who lives in L.A. So I went over to his house that day and spent the afternoon with him. He was really cool and I gave him all my books. About five days later, he calls me up and he's like reading to me out of my own books. "I've got this thing on page 19, this is fucking great stuff!" He's reading me shit and I'm like, "Wow! he likes me!" And we've been friends ever since. Now I carry all of his books for mail order at my company, I book him shows, and I'm sending him over to Holland next week for a festival.

JP: Do you book your own spoken word tours?

Rollins: Sometimes, sometimes I use my agent, the guy who does all the band gigs - Bob. But a lot of times, I book them myself. Or I use an independent promoter in Europe and Australia when I go over there to do them. I tour all over the world by myself.... I did my first cross-country talking tour in 1984 and I've been doing it ever since. Now I do about 15 countries a year all over Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, America... I do everything from universities like Yale to clubs. usually there's anywhere from 300 to 700 people per night.

YAL: What's been your favorite and least favorite shows?

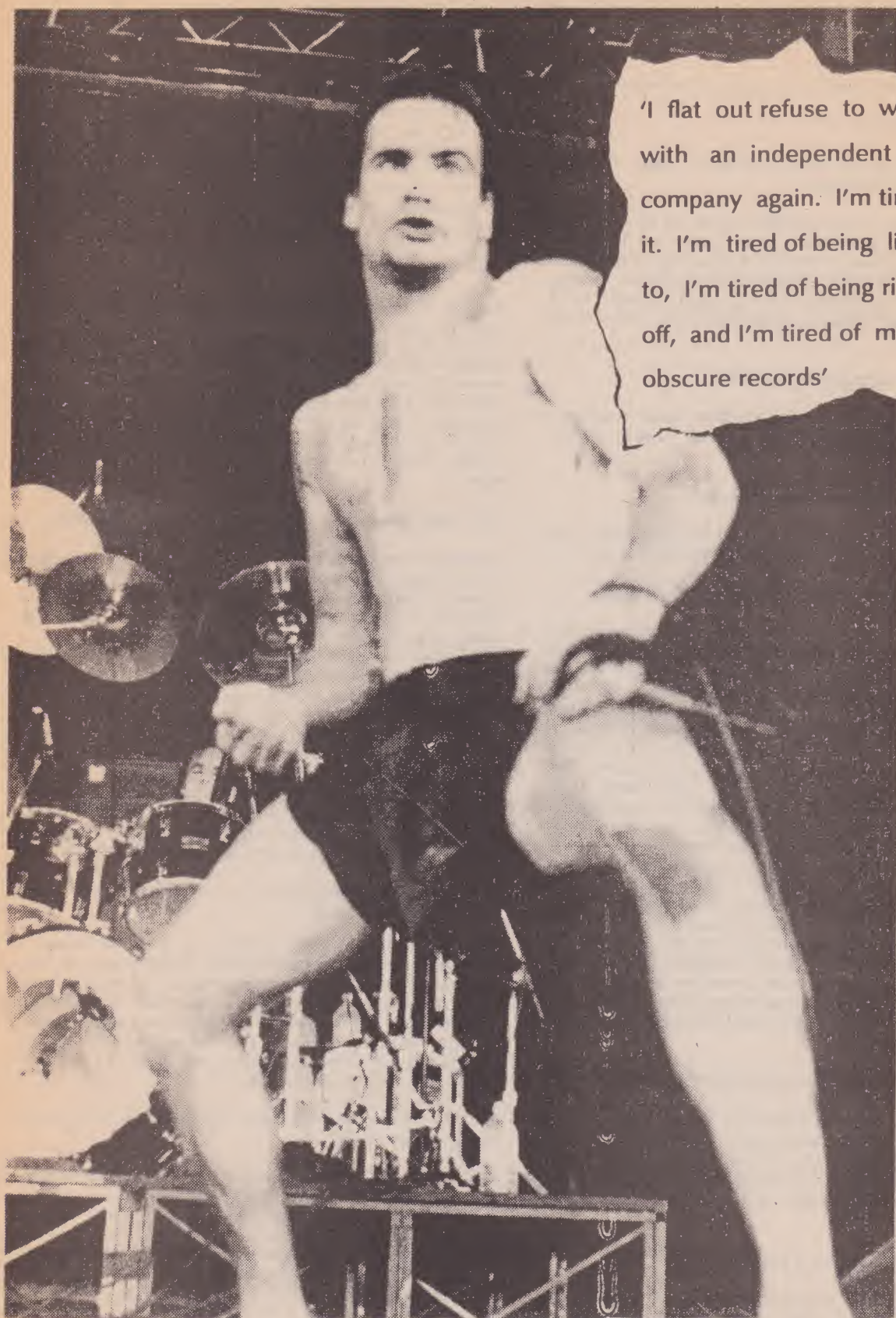
Rollins: On this tour? Favorite one, I don't know. There's been a lot of good shows. Least favorite I think was playing at Irvine, California, not because the crowd was bad or anything like that. It's just the way the place was built, here's the seats, then the lawn. The seats are so steep and the lawn is so far away. Warner Brothers had bought all the seats for their friends to watch Jane's Addiction so when we played, there was no one in front of us. But there were these people [on the lawn] way out there. You don't even know if they're there, someone could be holding up a piece of paper with a person drawn on it. It was a little lonely, but that was like the third, fourth and fifth show of the tour and we were just trying to get our concentration together about how to play during the daytime, outdoors, in front of no one. So those shows were very difficult, we played well but it was a strain to figure out how to gauge ourselves. But the rest of it has been fine.

SOL: What's the oddest thing you've discovered about being on the Lollapalooza tour?

Rollins: I've realized that a lot of this business is based on really bullshit logic, and that rock and roll logic makes no damn sense at all. Otherwise, it's just another tour for me. I've been doing this for ten years and yeah, this tour is a little bit different from the tours where I'm in the van. But in a way it's just the same - I get up in the morning, I go play. So it's nothing too odd. There's nothing odd about any of these bands, they're easy to understand.

SOL: Is there worse logic in the record business or if you're trying to push a book?

Rollins: Well, the book business I'm in is so small that it never gets too far away from our little office where we do the books. I mean, I'm not selling 50,000 or 100,000 of each title. And I'm the president of the company, it's my company, so it never gets too far out. With the record business, you're working for a shitload of people. For instance, I just signed with Imago Records, which is distributed through BMG. Everyday, on the average, I meet three BMG representative. At the end of this tour, I will have met like 70 people who work at BMG who will be handling my next record. All of a sudden, there's 70 brains around my shit. That's kind of weird,



'I flat out refuse to work with an independent record company again. I'm tired of it. I'm tired of being lied to, I'm tired of being ripped off, and I'm tired of making obscure records'

Photo by Johnny Puke

ROLLINS

because then you're dealing with 70 opinions, 70 little judgments. So sometimes ego gets involved...

SOL: It's also strange that when you were with Black Flag, Greg Ginn ran SST to a point. And now you're dealing with the head of the company and all the way down the totem pole [with people who]aren't really involved in the music from an artistic standpoint.

Rollins: That's what happens when you deal with a record company.

SOL: Is it confusing that you've got 70 minds there working around you that for the most part...

Rollins: No! No! As long as they do what they're told. And as long as I meet them and talk to them, and they can see what I'm like and they can fully experience the music, and they read the press releases that I give them to read. Which I do, and I update them and I tell them how I want it done. And the president of the label and I are good buddies. He's a good man. And we have a good relationship based on mutual respect. I think it will be just fine. But if you do anything like this, yeah, you take a chance. I can't afford to do the records myself and I flat out refuse to work with an independent record company again. I'm tired of it. I'm tired of being lied to, I'm tired of being ripped off, and I'm tired of making obscure records.

Everytime I do a record, it becomes a rare [collector's item] because no one can find it. I'm bored with it. I did it for ten years, I put my time in, now I want to try something else. I want to do a record where anyone can go in their town and find it in an unlimited edition.

JP: So are you supporting this idea by trying to get your image out in other ways than written and recorded works? For example, the ads you did for The Gap in Rolling Stone?

Rollins: The Gap ad I just thought was fun, a fun idea. I wanted to do it.

JP: Money didn't have anything to do with it?

Rollins: 750 bucks! If tomorrow I do a show, you paid me 750 bucks, I couldn't afford to do it. 750 bucks doesn't interest me. I lost money at 750 bucks. I happened to be in New York at the time, I figured it would be fun, working with Albert Watson, a world-famous photographer. I buy my clothes at The Gap anyway. It wasn't like, "Oh, I have to wear THIS!" I've got a load of shit at home like that anyway and they're good, solid, plain clothes, which is what I like. I'm a plain person.

JP: Most people probably assume that a big firm like The Gap would have an enormous budget to pay their "models."

Rollins: Sure, well, their campaign is that real people wear those clothes, you know? The new poster boy this week is Corey from Living Colour, but he only got one page - I got two pages! Also, I know, when I did that ad, I knew it would piss some people off. And that's at least one-third of the reason I did it. Because there would be those people going "Blah blah blah: and I just go "Fuck you!"

SOL: So what was your first major break?

Rollins: Bone? Or what?

SOL: No, in music.

Rollins: Well, joining Black Flag.

SOL: How did you start Black Flag?

Rollins: No! I didn't start Black Flag, Black Flag was around before me. What happened was they were friends of mine and I knew them, and one time they were in NY playing and I drove up from D.C. to see them because they were like my favorite band. They did an after-hours show and there was a song I wanted to sing. So I said to the singer, "Hey, Dez [Cadena], let me sing 'Clocked In'" and he went, "Here, man!" So I sang with them and everyone in the band went, "Hey, that was some pretty heavy shit."

JP: Was that at the Peppermint Lounge?

Rollins: No, it wasn't the Peppermint Lounge, it was, uh...

JP: A7 was an after hours place.

Rollins: I forget the name of the place. It was a Polish Hall and a guy named Chris used to run it... Club 57?

JP: Chris Williamson?

Rollins: No, no, no, no! This was a really cool Polish fellow. He booked all the Black Flag shows in New York for years. I love that guy. He fucking had to abduct his daughter to get her out of Poland and shit. He was a heavy dude, man. Great guy. Anyway, the band called me a few days later and said, "Hey, our singer wants to play rhythm guitar, do you want to try out for singer?" And I went, "Okay, I'll try out for singer." So I went up to New York and sang two sets with them. They said, "Do you wanna be in the band?" and I said, "Yeah!" That was 10 years ago last month.

[Talks here fades into talking about Rollins' dislike of the film "Barfly" after SOL had asked a few inane questions, first about tattoos and then if Rollins had been asked to appear on "Geraldo"]

JP: Getting back to Bukowski, what dealings have you had with him?

Rollins: None. I hung out with his wife one night. She's a nice lady. And I send him my books every once in a while, which he probably doesn't read. I sent him a manuscript recently from this guy Bill who wrote one of the books we have coming out. Bill really wanted Bukowski to write a thing for the back. I sent Bukowski a letter and said, "Look, I wouldn't dare waste your time with something if it was shit, but this is really amazing. Would you please consider doing a blurb?" I never heard back. But Iggy pop is going to give us one. I sent the book to Iggy and he really loved it - "Wow, this guy is really intense!"

JP: So no good stories about Bukowski barfing on your shoes?

Rollins: No, I really don't have much time for Bukowski, you know? How old are you?

JP: 25

Rollins: You should be reading Bukowski. Get a little older and all of a sudden he'll get real tired. You'll go like, "I could really live without this guy." I read him until I was about 26.

SOL: How old are you now?

Rollins: Thirty. And when you read Selby or you Camus, or you meet Selby, you go, "Fuck, man, Bukowski's got no balls. He's got no guts, all he does is complain. You meet Selby, the guy's had TB, he's all zipper scars. he breathes out of one half of a lung, one lung was removed and the other is half sawn off. And you see this guy who has survived heroin, survived alcohol, survived suicide attempts, time in the looney bin, and he's still, like, pure. You see him and his eyes are just burning. You never hear him complain. He's been told he's got six months to live, he's been told that so many times. He's got Death watching over him, he spent three years in a TB ward in Germany. And here's this guy who's just been through shit, just getting torn to shreds, and he's just like "I'm glad to be alive. I like people. I like life. What can I do for you?"

SOL: Do you seem him as kind of like a joke character? Been through so much...

Rollins: He's like a saint. He is a great lesson. Hanging out with him is a lesson that life is very strong and no matter how bad you have it, you never went through the wringer like Hubert Selby. So don't ever feel sorry for yourself, because you're not him. Once you read the book I have coming out by Bill Shields, Human Shrapnel... that's another guy who will make you glad to be alive. His book is the greatest anti-war statement I've ever seen. he's a Vietnam veteran and his whole book is about being in the country and it's the hairiest shit I've ever read. He talks about people being blown up next to him, turning into red mist. He came home with fingers missing and a big part of his stomach removed.

JP: Tell us about the film in Holland.

Rollins: I did a film with Don Bajema, he's a writer on my label, and Lydia Lunch. Lydia wrote the script and asked me to be in the thing. The plot was basically very simple. Don and Lydia are married, I'm an old boyfriend and I come to visit. Jealousy sets in, scandal, and finally the movie ends with me and Don at each others' throats. It was an interesting two and a half weeks.

JP: Who directed it?

Rollins: Lydia and her friend, Beth B.

JP: Did you ever see that stuff Beth B did with her husband? [Beth B and Scott B were influential underground filmmakers in New York in the early 80's.]

Rollins: No, I never saw them. I'm not really that interested in doing films. I don't really... actors are just the worst.

JP: Well, you did that thing with Richard Kern.

Rollins: One day with a Super 8 camera? Sure, I did an epic film with Richard Kern. It was one afternoon in upstate New York.

JP: A 20-minute film.

Rollins: The best part of that film was fucking Lydia in a swimming pool after the shoot. That was great.

JP: Those Kern films are fairly obscure, no one ever really gets to see them.

Rollins: Maybe it's for the better.

JP: Do you think this new thing with Lydia and Beth B will get any kind of distribution? Will people get to see it?

Rollins: I don't know. I've never seen it. I don't care if I ever see it. I'm not even interested. It really left a bad taste in my mouth.

SOL: When Perry started this tour, he stated that one of the goals was a mingling between the groups. Is there a mingling between the bands?

Rollins: Yeah. I hang ou with the Ice T guys a lot, the Butthole Surfers, and watch Ice T everyday.

SOL: Do you think any side projects might come out of this?

Rollins: Well, I think us and the Buttholes are going to record a jam in Texas.

JP: Is that thing you did with the Hard Ons going to come out over here?

SOL: The Hard Ons?

JP: Yeah, a record with an AC/DC cover.

Rollins: Yeah, we did that and a song we wrote together. We did that about a year ago. We had a night off in Sydney so we did it live. The Hard Ons are cool people, we toured Australia with them. Cool.

SOL: How are you going to treat going into the studio this time as opposed to before?

Rollins: Well, take more time. We're going to use a producer this time, we've never done that.



Photo by Johnny Puke

STILL GOING STEADY: Singles In The 90's

Or, How Much Is That 7-Inch In The Window?

If you listen to the poobahs of the music industry, the pundits on panels at the New Music Seminar and the CMJ Convention, you would think the seven-inch record had ceased to exist. It's certainly not a topic that anyone at this year's NMS bothered to address. Major labels don't even press singles anymore. But if the lowly seven-inch was indeed extinct, then why, we wondered, were so many of them coming in our mail every week? Obviously, somebody out there still has a use for them.

And so we decided to put together our own NMS-style panel -- a roundtable discussion from a bunch of folks who not only still like listening to singles, but put them out on their own record labels. Our panelists run the gamut from small, do-it-yourself labels like Footloose & Tragic Life, to larger and well-established labels that have been putting cool bands on cool singles for years, like Dionysus. Robert Griffin not only runs Scat Records, but publishes a quarterly magazine called "Seven" devoted entirely to 7 inches. Jim and Tom of Vital Music in New York City run a "Singles Club" must like Sub-Pop's. Mel Shredder has not only discovered some great bands (like Jawbreaker) on his label, but works at Blacklist Mailorder. The music they release on their labels ranges from hardcore to punk, from retro 60's psychedelia to mainstream alternative pop. Our respondents' ages range from 36 (old enough to remember when the single was still more important than the album in rock 'n roll) to 23, young enough not to remember a time before the indie, DIY 7 inch became a commonplace. If you like singles, if you wonder about where they're headed, and if you're thinking of releasing one yourself, you should find this informative and, we hope, fun. We also asked our panelists to give us a list of their favorite singles (which everybody noted would change if they were to make up the list a week later).

- Jim Testa

Our Roundtable:

Lee Joseph - Dionysus Records, Los Angeles
Band - Yard Trauma

Mel Shredder - Shredder Records, San Francisco

John Lisa and Anthony "T.J." Quatrone - Tragic Life

Jim and Tom - Vital Music, New York City
Bands - Rats Of Unusual Size, Acidental
Potato Chip, Sea Monkeys

Al Flipside - Flipside Records, Los Angeles

Bill Sassenberger - Toxic Shock Records, Tucson

Robert Griffin - Scat Records, Cleveland

John Kass - Susstones Records, Minneapolis

Brian Buono - Footlong Records, Albany
Band - Glee Club

PART ONE: Romance - The Past

WHY DO YOU LIKE THE 7 INCH FORMAT? WHAT IS IT ABOUT SINGLES THAT APPEALS TO YOU?

Lee Joseph - Dionysus: I grew up with the 7 inch record. One of my brothers was a dj on a small rock n roll station in the late 50's. By the time I was 5 or 6, my brother would (once in a while on a good day) reach into one of the huge boxes of what seemed like an endless supply of singles that held what he had taken from the radio station, and give me one. I was fascinated not only by the music, but by the sleeve (many didn't have pic sleeves but had stock label sleeves with corny pics or the label's catalog), the label, the grooves. The 45 rpm record became little universes, with worlds within themselves that kept my fascination day after day...

Those three minutes on that round piece of plastic gave me reason to live, as I was pretty much on the outside of my peers. Most of the kids thought I was a creep or a geek. I didn't care because I had a massive collection of SINGLES (some lp's too)! Although I never thought about classifying music back then, I would stack singles on the changer (ouch!) and heard R&B/badass instrumentals/tearjerkers and whatever else fell into my hands. When I started buying the things on my own, my tastes meandered in the then-current Rock/Psychedelic stuff, and even some bubblegum.

I continued purchasing singles all through high school (mostly old stuff at thrift stores) and even bought a small number of (at the time) current things, like "School's Out" and "Saturday Night's All Right For Fighting." When the wave of Punk/DIY singles came in, I appreciated the sudden onslaught of independent singles, which totally reminded me of the 60's, before my teenage years were ruined by the snoozola FM arena-rock crap.

JOHN LISA - Tragic Life

"Nervous Breakdown"
- Black Flag

"We All Fall Down"
- Egghunt

"Nights In White Satin"
- Dickies

"Academy Fight Song"
- Mission Of Burma

"Heaven Just Being With You"
- Hard Ons

"X-Feminist"
- Chemical People

"8 Miles High"
- Husker Du

"Trapped"/"Guts"
- Swallow

"Busy"/"Equalized"
- Jawbreaker

"Less Than Gravity"
- Moving Targets

Robert: (I own) 500-800 (singles), I don't really know. I have five two-foot long boxes. I'm a collector but not a scum - I've never bought more than one copy of a record, unless I wore out the first one. I've paid up to \$25 for something I really wanted, but usually I'll just tape it from a friend if the prices are insane. It's very irksome to see people buying multiple copies of a release just to resell them later, especially a title that I've released - but that's the mentality. Some are born to be car salesmen and others to be record dealers.

Brian Buono: I own about 200 singles but I wouldn't consider buying anything by bands I don't enjoy. If some ding dong wants to lay down \$100 for a single, that's their choice; you won't ever see me doing it. Colored vinyl don't mean fuck - it's the music that matters.

John Kass: I own about 2500 singles so yes, I consider myself a collector. What do I think about people paying \$100 for a Misfit single or something like that? It's fine with me. Send for my list. See what I got.

Colored vinyl? Yes or not, I don't care, as long as it doesn't make the record more expensive. People who charge an extra \$2 for colored vinyl are ripping you off. It costs maybe an extra 15 cents per record to do a single on colored vinyl.

John Lisa: I personally own about 850 singles and would obviously be considered a collector. I love buying 7 inches and supporting DIY bands. I'll usually buy anything that doesn't look too mainstream, pop, or commercial.

T.J. owns about 100 7 inches and doesn't consider himself a collector. For him to buy a single, he has to have heard the band before or have some information on them, maybe from a review or the radio.

Tom - Vital Music: I own about 200 singles, not counting the thousands that Jim and I own with Vital Music Records. I do collect but I'm not a fanatic.

Jim - Vital Music: The whole reason we started our singles club is I really missed all those groovy colors. Colored vinyl is delicious.

Lee Joseph - Dionysus: I am a heavy collector of singles. I'm not sure exactly how many I own, scattered between my parents' house and my place, but the number is well into the thousands.

PART TWO: Business - The Future

WILL CASSINGLES AND CD-5'S EVENTUALLY REPLACE VINYL SINGLES, THE WAY CASSETTES AND CD'S HAVE VIRTUALLY REPLACED THE VINYL ALBUM?

Mel Shredder: Singles are the only vinyl that will continue to survive continuing changes in musical formats.

Robert Scat: Cassettes will become pretty insignificant in the next few years, I predict. 7 inches are finally beginning to die, sad to say. If a CD single can be kept at \$5 or less (with at least 18 mins. of music) they just may begin to have an impact.

Jim F: Cassingles? Ha ha ha, you're not serious? Ha ha ha, you're joking, right? Ha ha ha.

John Kass: I think CD5's and cassingles already have replaced the vinyl 7 inch in the marketplace. Only about one out of a 1,000 or 5,000 "singles" sold are on vinyl anymore. So what we're talking about is a very, very small segment of the market. It all depends, if someone keeps pressing 7 inch singles, they'll keep coming out.

ROBERT GRIFFIN - Scat Records

"2 Lives" + 2
- Vertigo

"Some Throte, Ded Goat"
- Pure Joy

"Don't Mind" + 3
- Gerrymander Bob

"Just Might Cry"
- Liquor Giants

"Brother Brick Says"
- Clawhammer

"Cherry Cherry"
- Unrest

"No Time"/"You Get Nothing"
- Halo Of Flies

"Slack Motherfucker"
- Superchunk

"Nitroglycerine"
- Gories

Lee Joseph: The CD single and cassingle really take the art away from the vinyl 45, the visual and physical that makes these things so appealing. Pre-recorded cassettes degrade quite fast, especially near the reels. When you've got a tape with only 3 minutes on it, you're looking at a phasey piece of useless shit within a month or so! The CD single is a joke! I thought that one of the reasons people liked CD's so much is that they can hear 70 minutes of music in one shot, without having to move their pathetic lard asses in order to hear some "selections." The CD single ain't gonna appeal to those clowns. No room for cool sleeve designs, label designs, cryptic messages on the lead out, inserts, color vinyl, NO FUN, MAN!

MEL CHEPLOWITZ - Shredder

"White Man"/"The Prisoner"
- The Clash

"Busy"/"Equalized"
- Jawbreaker

"Hot Wire Your Heart"
- Crime

"Words Come Back"
- Hated

"Statenen Capitalet"
- Ebba Gron

"In A Free Land"
- Husker Du

"Just Like Heaven"
- Dinosaur Jr.

"Who's Gonna Tell Mary?"
- Moondogs

"Babylonian Gorgon"
- Bags

"War Hero"
- Toxic Reasons

Some people think that in order for a single to be great, both sides (or all tracks) have to be top notch. While blazing double sides are cool, if even one song touches my soul or moves my adrenalin, that's plenty enough to make it a killer in my book.

John Kass - Susstones: I like them because they're quick, inexpensive, and they're the most disposable form of art ever.

Bill - Toxic Shock: I like 7 inches because they usually document a band in their prime. There's no room for filler and they capture a moment in history like a time capsule. Many bands have already peaked by the time they do their first lp. They spend too much time (mine!) trying to expand on a good thing, but often blow it with inferior songs to fill an album up. Maybe it's my short attention span, but I prefer a couple of great singles to a half-ass album.

Brian - Footlong Records: 7-inch records can be found almost exclusively in the punk/hardcore scene. This is what appeals to me. Many underground jazz, blues & folk groups have forsaken vinyl (esp. singles) in favor of the almighty compact disc. The fact that singles are uniquely punk rock in an era of digital perfection makes them special.

Robert Griffin - Scat: Why? What everybody'll say... 45's ARE rock 'n roll. I don't think the music has ever really made the jump to the LP format since the 60's. Short attention span...most bands only make 2 or 3 great songs anyway.

Mel Shredder: I like the artwork, the personal feel, and the fact that you're hearing the songs the band wants to feature.

Al Flipside: I don't really like the 7" format, to tell you the truth. They're a real pain in the ass to play. Especially punk singles, you have to keep getting up to change them and all that...but a good single is priceless if it's good.

Jim - Vital Music: Seven inches are cheap. When I only had a couple of bucks, singles were all I could afford. Now that I'm older, I still only have a couple of bucks.

Tom - Vital Music: The 7 inch format is both cheap to make (almost anyone can have a release) and inexpensive to buy. It gives you an opportunity to take a chance on a band you haven't heard before without laying out \$15 for a CD. Also with today's mastering technology, you can pack a lot of stuff onto a 7 inch EP without losing much quality.

John Kass - Susstones: "Woolly Bully" by Sam The Sham & The Pharoahs. Because it was rowdy and it was fun and it was scary, because I could tell it wasn't a bunch of white guys doing it. It was something very different from my middle class white upbringing.

John Lisa - Tragic Life: Bands usually start out with a 7 inch because it's a more professional medium than a demo tape, and it can show that they're a bit more serious about themselves since the investment is substantially more. There is something "Do It Yourself" about a 7 inch, compared to the lp or CD. The band usually has more control over the final product. There is also a versatility to your budget when doing a 7 inch. You can press as many as you want and charge what you want. You have the option of selling a lot just to break even (which means selling at a cheaper price) or selling at a higher price to try to make a profit (which almost never happens with a band's first release).

CAN YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST SINGLE YOU HEARD THAT CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

Al Flipside: The first single I heard was when my sister got "They're Coming To Take Me Away!" by Napoleon 13. She played the fuck out of it and it changed my life. I especially loved the flipside! [Ed.-For you younger readers, the flipside was the same song as the A side, but backwards]

Jim Fourniadis: "Joy To The World" by 3 Dog Night. My major revelation was when I found out they were white.

John Lisa: It was probably Minor Threat's "Salad Days" EP. The music was exciting, melodic, and powerfully hard-edged stuff. The message was positive and sentimental. I guess that record initiated "emo-core," spawning a generation of melodic hardcore bands (of which my band Sleeper can be considered a part).

Robert Griffin: The Pagans' "Street Where Nobody Lives." A jr high pal played it for me over the phone. I was absolutely amazed. 1979, I think.

Bill Sassenberger: Flipper's "Ha Ha Ha." I traveled 500 miles to see them at Eastern Front because of that single. There's hundreds more that have inspired and moved me since.

Tom - Vital Music: "Up Around The Bend" by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

HOW MANY SINGLES DO YOU OWN? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF COLLECTORITIS -- SPENDING \$100 FOR AN OLD MISFITS SINGLE, THINGS LIKE THAT? AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT COLORED VINYL?

Al Flipside: I'm not a collector but I probably have 1000 singles or more. I don't keep very many that I get lately but I used to keep a lot in the late 70's, early 80's. Collectors items suck. If it's that much in demand, the record company should just re-release it.

Colored vinyl is great because it gives each project an even more unique flavor - however, I don't like limited editions just to get the "collector" to buy every color or style.

Mel Shredder: I don't consider myself a collector. If I can't get a single, I'm satisfied to get it on tape. If someone wants to pay \$40 for a 7 inch, that's okay, that's what money is for.

Bill: I own 600 or so 7 inches since I started collecting in the early 80's. Colored vinyl was exciting, especially with creative variations, but the market's now saturated with it and it's lost its appeal for me.



BILL SASSENBERGER, TOXIC SHOCK

TOXIC SHOCK

Bill: You can't replace what a 7 inch does for me aesthetically with a lousy cassette (gimme a break!) or those hi-tech shiny CD's. The packaging of a single with its graphics, etchings on the inner groove, color wax, CAN'T be replaced. Let the majors phase out singles, it'll only make the underground stronger and it's about time, I say.

John - Tragic Life: I think that 7 inches will always be around in the alternative/punk/hardcore market. CD5's are a bit too expensive to make and cassingles just aren't exciting, and can't cut it in the collectors market. Economically, cassettes might be better than vinyl but they aren't taken as seriously.

Brian Buono: CD5's and cassingles will replace vinyl singles someday but it won't be for a while. Remember 8 tracks?

DISCUSS YOUR DISTRIBUTION. IS IT GETTING HARDER TO FIND DISTRIBUTORS WHO WILL CARRY SINGLES?

Bill: Distribution for Toxic Shock singles has shifted away from larger, uncaring distributors like Caroline (anyone out there able to deal with that brick wall named Chas in NY?), Important, and the like, and is now doing better dealing with other indie labels who do their own distribution and mail order, like the good folks at Rave, Ajax, Subterranean, Get Hip Forefront, and Dionysus.

Robert - Scat: Scat is also a distributor. For other distributors I use, anyone over 30 days late gets cut off. Many distributors have folded, others have cut out vinyl; in the end, distributors respond to what their stores want, so don't be too quick to point a finger. Stores respond to their customers, etc. ...

Al Flipside: Flipside Records are sold through Mordam. It gets harder to sell vinyl period because of the CD invasion, but a lot of people who do singles are using Mordam (Sympathy, Lookout, etc) so I guess there's a pretty good stronghold there.

John Kass - Susstones: It's getting harder and harder to find distributors who will carry vinyl, let alone 7 inch singles. There is no market for it anymore. Every major city has a handful of stores that still carry 7 inch singles. It's not the distributors' fault, it's not really the stores' fault. It's just what people want, and there just aren't that many people out there wanting independent 7 inch singles.

Lee Joseph - Dionysus: Our distribution is turning away from the thieves at the larger distributors who lack the talent for selling music on vinyl anymore. What we are seeking is smaller distributors getting a real line on the stores that care about this stuff. Chains and larger stores are dead meat for singles. They don't want 'em. In the case of Tower here in California, the stores can sell records, but the powers that be (whoever the fuck they are) are telling the buyers "NO MORE VINYL." (This is a true story.)

Mel Shredder: Sales for indie singles are very healthy, despite a glut of them, most of which have no reason to exist. It kills me that there are bootlegs by Fugazi and other pathetically overrated bands.

FOOTLONG!

Brian - Footlong: Distribution is cool if you don't mind a lot of work. To us, it's definitely worth dealing with other labels and kids instead of big ass-fuck corporate distributors. I'd like to keep all the money inside the inner circle of bands and do it yourself labels.



JIM and TOM of VITAL MUSIC

PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ

Jim - Vital Music: Distributors - just love 'em. Maybe Tower and K-Mart won't accept our vinyl, but then again they rarely did, even when they carried vinyl. The small guys still distribute 7 inches, no problem.

John: Distribution for Tragic Life Records from day one has been a nightmare. The bigger distributor I have been using takes 7 inches in quantities of 200-500, sells out of them quickly and re-orders. But when the consignment date is up, they NEVER make the payment. They are usually 4 to 8 months late and it always involves me making loads of phone calls asking for my money.

It is getting progressively harder to find distributors to carry 7 inches. I believe they will eventually be done away with.

Blacklist is reliable. I've never used Mosh Pit and I refuse to deal with NewWorld because of their reputation. The most help comes from the good folk at Maximum Rock N Roll. Tim Yohannon and crew are supportive. He has bought stuff from me, re-ordered, and then sold it at low markup.

BILL SASSENBERGER - Toxic Shock

"Love Canal"/"Ha Ha Ha"
- Flipper

"War Dance"
- Killing Joke

"Holiday In Cambodia"
- Dead Kennedys

"Survive"
- The Bags

"Teenage Time Killer"
- Rudimentary Peni

"Quincy"
- Peace Corps

"Girl On The Run"
- Honeybane

"Teen Love"
- No Trend

"New Strings For Old Puppets"
- Really Red

"Out Of Vogue"
- Middle Class

DO YOU DO MAIL ORDER? DO YOU SEE MAIL ORDER (OR MAIL ORDER HOUSES LIKE BLACKLIST, MOSH PIT, ETC) AS THE FUTURE OF THE 7 INCH, OR CAN THEY SURVIVE IN THE RETAIL MARKETPLACE?

Lee - Dionysus Records: Mail order is truly growing by leaps & bounds. We run a mail order service that currently stocks over 700 different titles on 7" (as well as tons of lps and mags). We see customers ordering 10-50 different singles in one shot. It used to be most of the customers were from Europe or more remote cities in the States, but now we have a ton of names from the larger cities. Mail order brings many of the harder to find titles to the interested. Also, labels are trading their titles for other titles on other labels, and selling these through their own mail order to friends and local stores. This trading has created a great network for the 7 inch market. Hopefully there will be a balance of mail order and retail sales to keep the thing alive IF the huge flood of singles doesn't totally botch up the market.

Mel Shredder: The stores aren't too bad about carrying singles because they do sell, but Blacklist really keeps it going, and does everything with integrity to the max.

Brian: Mail order is definitely becoming the primary vehicle for getting the records out there. Non-profit mail order places (like Blacklist) seem to be able to sustain themselves.

Bill Toxic Shock: Of course we do our own mail order and have done so, I might add, ten years before Blacklist was a twinkle in MRR's eye. Not only for our own label but for dozens of other indie labels who release 7 inches.

John Kass - Susstones - I do a lot of mail order. Without both, the small amount of retail there is and mail order, it would be very tough to continue.

John - Tragic Life: Mail order is okay, I guess. The only problem is that you can't impress on people that you are reliable. They are usually not too quick to send money thru the mail. Tragic Life always sends out orders within two days and it's always cheaper to buy through the mail. All our 7 inches sell for \$3 by mail order.

Robert - Scat: Mail order seems to be growing. I do quite a bit of business that way (at least 200 people who order ever 2-3 months, another 200 once a year - it's nice to be in touch with the people who buy your releases). The 7 inch will survive at the retail level (maybe 150 stores that still carry vinyl, I'd guess) as long as there is a demand. I don't think it can survive as mail order-only. You can only sell so many records that way.

CAN PRESSING PLANTS SURVIVE ON THE SMALL, LIMITED RUNS OF INDIE AND DIY SINGLES, NOW THAT THE MAJOR LABELS AREN'T PRESSING MILLIONS OF SINGLES? OR DO YOU FORESEE A DAY WHEN THE SINGLES MARKET MAY BECOME A MONOPOLY CONTROLLED BY ONE OR TWO FACTORIES (THE WAY EVATONE IS NOW THE ONLY FIRM IN AMERICA THAT MAKES FLEXI DISCS)?

John Kass - Susstones: I'm actually getting sick of doing 7 inch singles anyway, I've done so many of them. I've probably released 50 of them by now. I really like the idea of doing 10-inch records. Sure, it costs three times as much, but it's different. It doesn't really fit anywhere in a record store, and I like that. Where do you put this? I want to do 10 inches and I want to do full-length projects on CD's, with LP's and cassettes, all three formats on 10 inches. That's the coolest.

Jim - Vital Music: When I asked Jim Piccolo at Aligned Audio in Brooklyn that question, he said he's never been more busy. Now that the major record companies have closed their pressing plants, all the little guys are taking up the slack. It seems even the big (major label) plants used to take orders from small guys like us just to keep presses running.

Al Flipside: I don't see a big problem for a few years yet. The pressing plants I use are always backed up with a good two week waiting period.

Right now, singles are basically a break even/ promotional only proposition. If prices went any higher for a 7 inch (including mastering, sleeve, metal parts, labels and vinyl) then I would definitely do 12" EP's if not LP's. At least the profit margin gives you a little more room to work out a break even plan or even do some advertising!

HOW MANY COPIES OF EACH SINGLE DO YOU PRESS, AND WHAT'S A REALISTIC SALES FIGURE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE BAND IN TODAY'S MARKET?

Al Flipside: We press 1500-2000 singles. We reasonably sell about 600-800, use about 200-300 for promotion, and the bands sell the rest. If it's a really popular title (not a first release, usually), then we sell about 800 - 1000. As far as I can tell, the market is staying the same. It used to be (years ago) that you could sell more but it seems there is a saturation of singles out there now (look how many singles labels like SubPop, Sympathy, Nemesis, and Lookout pump out there! I can't keep up!). We sell about the same of every release.

Mel Shredder: We press 2000 of every single. Unknown bands should press 500. Better known bands should press 1000, you have to be pretty well known to sell much more than that. Colored vinyl increases sales.

Some tips: KDISC in Hollywood does the best mastering. Don't put out singles at 33 rpm! 45 rpm only! You can't fit more on at 33 rpm - If someone tells you otherwise, they have a weak grasp of the laws of physics. Don't put big holes in the middle unless you harbor illusions of being on jukeboxes.

Jim: At Vital Music, we press 1000 on colored vinyl and we do our re-presses in clear vinyl. No black! It's hard to say on average how much we sell because we're still selling. I think the market is consistent, taking into account normal up and down cycles in buying. Take this example:

Q: Buy records or go to beach? A: Go to beach.

Q: Buy records or buy calculus book? A: Buy records!

Tom - Vital Music: Remember, we do our re-pressings on clear vinyl, so you can always tell a Vital Music repress. Don't let them fool you at the store into thinking it's a limited edition clear vinyl 7 inch! I would say 1000 is a good goal for either a label or a band. Between gigs, mail order, and stores, almost anyone could eventually move that many. 1000 is also a break even point, depending on packaging and your production costs. The market is growing now, but it eventually died. But a lot of good will happen with 7 inches from now until it does.

Lee - Dionysus: Press runs slightly differ from title to title. For us, paper parts (labels & sleeves) are done in 1500 to 2000 runs, with records being pressed in 1200-1500 runs. With printing, the price drops drastically after 1000. It's much cheaper to re-press records if you have extra labels and sleeves already done. As far as quantity, first singles generally don't sell that great, unless you are on some ultra-hip label that all the sheep flock to, no matter what kind of garbage you spew out. With my group Yard Trauma, we had some prior releases & touring under our belt, so it was safe to do a 2000+ run.

John - Tragic Life: Depending on how many copies I think I can get rid of, that's how many I'll press. It's somewhere between 500 and 1000, although we've already pressed 1250 copies of our fourth 7 inch, by a band called Stand Up from Pennsylvania, and it's now out of print.

Most of our releases are still in stock, but once they're gone, we won't re-press. Instead we are doing a compilation CD (with bonus tracks) for a very low price.

John Kass - Susstones: I press 500 initially, and re-press in batches of 200. I use 150 copies of each record for promotion, mainly press and some radio. And 25 copies of each record to the band, and if they want more they can buy them at cost. That means if my first pressing sells out, I've sold 350, and if I re-press a couple of times, I've sold about 750, so that's my realistic sales figure. The larger singles labels probably sell up to 2000.

Robert - Scat: I don't announce press run sizes anymore (I don't want people to buy a record just because few were made). Releases from now through the fall will range in size from 400 to 4000. For a band just out of the blocks, I would advise beginning with no more than 500; you can always re-press.

Brian - Footlong: There are too many bands and labels now. The market's inundated. Punk sucks. Go kill yourself.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST RECENT RELEASE? AND YOUR MOST RECENT PURCHASE?

Al Flipside: Our most recent release is a 3-song, 7" EP by the Paper Tulips that comes with a 16-pg booklet. I haven't bought a single in so long... I think it was Mudhoney's "Touch Me I'm Sick" or something.

Jim - Vital Music: "Bring Me The Head Of Jerry Garcia" by Iron Prostate.

Tom - Vital Music: My most recent purchases was the Amphetamine Reptile 4 song EP with Helmet, Tar and two other bands. I actually traded for it at Bleecker Bobs when I dropped off records. He gave it to me for \$2, it listed for \$4.99. Was he crazy, or nice?

Mel Shredder: Our next release is "Worlds In Shreds Vol. 5" Also we did a Special Forces single in August, their first release in three years.

Bill Toxic Shock: Our last 7 inch releases were the Volumes 6 and 7 of our Noise From Nowhere series (started in 1983): #6 has Treepeople on one side with House Of Large Sizes on the other. We're proud of that single, it captures both bands doing what they do best. #7 features Bhang Revival with Hullabaloo. Smokin' stuff! There's 2000 of NFN #6 and 1000 of #7 out there, with 200 each on colored vinyl.



YARD TRAUMA (with LEE JOSEPHS of DIONYSUS)

LEE JOSEPH - Dionysus Records

"Just Like Your Mom"/"Cab Driver"
- VoxPop

"Talk Talk"
- Music Machine

"School's Out"
- Alice Cooper

"The Hurdy Gurdy Man"
- Donovan

"Under Over Sideways Down"
- Yardbirds

"Why Do You Treat Me So Bad?"
- The Misanthropes

"Rivered"/"She No Rattle My Cage"
- Girl Trouble

SHREDDER

John - Tragic Life: Our most recent release is my band Sleeper's 7-inch, 3 song EP. My most recent purchase was the "Sasquatch" double-7 inch compilation with Cringer, Nuisance, Schlöng, Nomeansno, and Victims Family.

Robert - Scat: Out in August - Attic Tragedy 10" (Cleveland Archives series #2), Nothing Painted Blue 7 inch, Burning Lesbians 7 inch; coming later, SEVEN #7 (with Mono Men 7 inch), a Sockeye 7 inch, My Dad Is Dead lp/CD, and a Prisonshake 10"/CD5.

I don't buy many records because I get so many through my distribution company, but I did blow \$100 at Pier Platters on a recent trip to New York.

John Kass - Susstones: I release my singles in batches, so my most recent release list is quite long. I also buy a lot of singles, and because of the label, I get to do a lot of trades. I just recently went all through Minneapolis and came home with a pile of 40 new 7 inches.

Susstones/Prospective/Pig's Eye Records most recent releases:

Swingin' Teens, "Fire In My Head" 7"

Amanda By Night, "Let It Bob" 7" EP

Third Eye, "Sunshine" 7"

Dangtrippers, "Head Hunter" 7"

Big Red Ball, "Madamme Gray" 7"

Pseudonymphs, "I Punched A Cop" 7"

Sparrows, "Build This House" 7"

Contras, "Fingernail Polish" 7"

Brian - Footlong: Glee Club "Faraway Lands" 7" Ep, 300 first pressing, 500 second. All Fall Down "Nothing" 7" EP, 300 first pressing, 500 second. Terror Cake "Oozing Rhyme" 7" EP, 500 first pressing. Coming soon - an Albany compilation 7-inch with Glee Club, All Fall Down, Intent, Substance, and Terror Cake. We're pressing 2000. The first 1000 will come with a copy of RAKE fanzine. Also, we're doing a Substance 7 inch.

Lee - Dionysus: Our most recent releases are by an Italian group called the Nicotine Spyral Surfers, a 4 track comp of groups from the Stanton Park label, a second Electric Ferrets EP, Black Angels Death Song, Scratch Bongowax, Popdefect, and more. My latest purchase? Well, considering that last week I bought about 100 titles for our mail order company (and kept one of each for me) it might be hard to get it all down on paper. This week's faves? Rollins Band "I Know You," Treehouse "Strawberry Pie"/"Shag Carpet," any Undertones, Billy Ward & The Dominoes' "Jenny Lee." I love music & communication of ideas and feelings through music. I love records, especially the single. What a great combination.

All of these guys have released some terrific singles and they'll be happy to send you a catalog in return for a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please mention that you read about them in Jersey Beat if you write.

Dionysus Records - PO Box 1975, Burbank CA 91507

Flipside Records - PO Box 363, Whittier CA 90608

Footlong Records, 3 Highland Dr, E Greenbush NY 12061

Scat Records - PO Box 141161, Cleveland OH 44114

Shredder Records - 181 Shipley St, San Francisco CA 94107

Susstones Records - PO Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406

Toxic Shock Records - PO Box 43787, Tucson AZ 85719

Vital Music - 81 Second Ave, New York NY 10003

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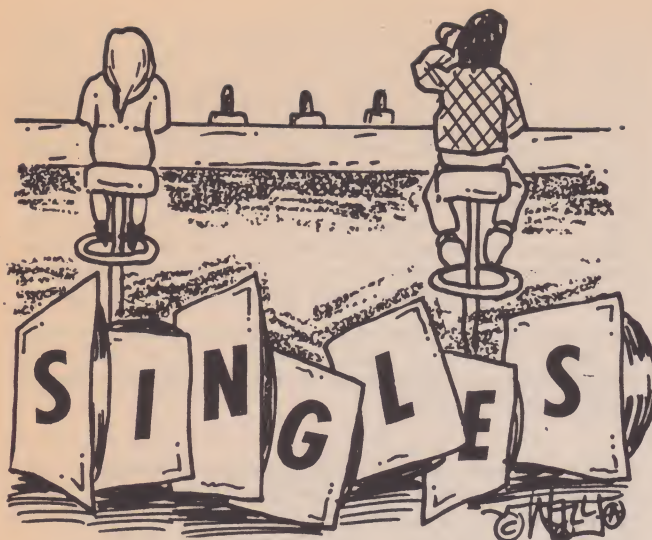
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7 LEAGUE BOOTS 7"

Constant Change, 2028 W Main Rd, Middletown RI 02840

7 League Boots are best described by their singer, Bobby Sullivan, in his interview back in Jersey Beat #41 - half reggae and half a more rock-oriented Soulsider. Bingo. "Man About Town" has a good driving rhythm, a dash of slap bass and the second half of the song reminded me of Soundgarden. The flip, "Big Book," is a great reggae song that accents Bobby's already memorable voice. A good single with excellent lyrics.

- Tom A.

8 BARK

"The Big Wheel," 7" EP

Underdog, PO Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614

After many a ranting review, I finally get to hear what this bunch is all about. Immediate reactions? Running all over my room, screaming in pleasure, masturbation, groveling... And then of course, grabbing an envelope and shoving three bucks in it to order their earlier EP. I've always liked bands that feature male/female vocals, and 8 Bark is no exception. Keli Sullivan's sweet voice starts out all the songs, soon thereafter replaced by the blistering yowls of Doug Ward. This is not Nausea, but rather a punk band that writes great, personalized core tunes. Take a chance.

- Mike L.

ALL YOU CAN EAT "...With Salad Bar" EP
PO Box 312, Larkspur CA 94977

I've known Devon Morf, the singer of AYCE, for a couple of years, both as the editor of Wajlemac fanzine and in a couple of other bands -- all of which prepared me for the deliciously goofy cuts on this ep about the little tin shogun who comes to life, or the guy who sees his best friend's girl in a porno video. But there are also two serious cuts here -- one about family strife, the other an indictment of date rape -- that are as cutting and forceful as anything in the Fugazi repertoire. Multi-dimensional, fun yet serious, with music that's always fast & agile. Great picture sleeve too. Buy it.

- Jim T.

APPALACHIAN DEATH RIDE 3 song 7"

Lovehammer, PO Box 10073, Columbus OH 43201

On first listen, I thought this was much darker and heavier than it actually is, but it's still pretty cool to listen to in the dark, esp the guitar and bass. The three-chord epic on the second side is a little long, but it vaguely reminds me of live Crazy Horse stuff...something I haven't really listened to since Eighth Grade, but now I admit I'm vaguely interested.

- Bill L.

ASTRONAUTS

"Constitution" 7"

Acid Strings, PO Box 22 Hitchin, Herts England

Something about this makes me think this is what college radio would have sounded like during the Middle Ages. Weird? You betcha. Good? Actually...yes! This is the first I've heard from this British nine-piece. The title cut conjures up weird images of a medieval British pub filled with drunken adventurers waving their flagons along with the music. The flip, "Please Don't Come Round Tonight," is a bit more conventional and, dare I say, catchy. Worth looking into for something a bit different.

- Mike L.

BABYLAND EP

Flipside, Box 363, Whittier CA 90608

Angry garage industrial that sounds a lot like an underproduced Al Jourgensen project. This record is pretty damn good for a debut release, and I'm sure it's only a matter of time before they're scooped up by some major label. I particularly like the song "Mindfuck," with its tv game show samples and overloaded mic distortion. And the mini-poster that comes with the record has some cool apocalyptic art. Good job.

- Leif

THE BAGS "L. Frank Baum"/"Max Roach" 7"

Stanton Park, PO Box 58, Newtonville MA 02160

They stole their name from a seminal L.A. punk band, named these two songs after famous people, and sound like a cheesy Kiss cover band.

- Jim T.

BIG DRILL CAR/CHEMICAL PEOPLE Split 7"

Cruz

With summer winding down, I must say I've been in the mood for useless, uplifting punk rock cover tunes lately. Ahh! Perfect timing for this puppy! Big Drill Car do a fine job punking up Cheap Trick's great "Surrender," while the Chemical People rip up side two with their version of "Getaway" by Kiss. Frightening how similar Jaime Pina's screams are to Paul Stanley's! Wow.

- Mike L.

BLACK ANGELS DEATH SONG 7"

Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank CA 91507

From the world of Dionysus Records and their string of colored vinyl singles comes a two-song, pee colored offering from Black Angels Death Song. First side is kind of limp, garagey rock and the second side is long & slow, a bit like Mudhoney's "Mudride" - although that's not an on-the-dime comparison. But you get the idea.

- Tom A.

BLACK DAHLIA 7"

Funky Mushroom, Box 100270 Brooklyn NY 11210

Jon Ment, who runs this label, told me this would be "gothic," but I'm not sure that's what I'd call it. Mostly it reminds me of a lot of bands I never liked to listen to much, like Echo & The Bunnymen and all those affected British haircut bands of a few years ago.

- Jim T.

CRANKSHAFT

"Shankcraft" 7" EP

No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville FL 32604

La de da da, I'm so happy, na na na na, punk with ska/funk touches, La de da da. Fuck! Na na na na...

- Matt S.

CHIKARA 7" ep

PO Box 65331 Stn F, Vancouver BC Canada V5N 5P3

This is a band I've been waiting to hear for a long time. Let me tell you, it was worth the wait. This record bitches from its top-quality printed sleeve to its eye-opening songs about Indians, girls, and knights. The sound would make Kevin Culture of Dead Silence proud. Write for it and ask for the Chikara Records catalog while you're at it. Cool stuff from north of the border.

- Jerod H.

CHOOSEY MOTHERS

"D.U.I." 7"

Booze Fighter, Box 101511, Denver CO 80250

"DUI" is Colorado's version of DWI - Driving Under The Influence - and this vinyl frisbee celebrates the joys and perils of driving drunk. The Choosey Mothers play a straightahead rootsy, bluesy sort of power-punk. Sure it's simple but it rocks. I like it.

- Jim T.

CRUST 7"

Trance Syndicate

Pretty strange A side, a distant voice over some weird music bursts into a Buttholes-twisted version of "Feelings." The flip is even more flipped out, a montage of voices slapped over some odd percussion, not unlike pots and pans being pounded together. It's a lot like your radio tuned midway between a talk show and some deejay playing world beat music. Pretty fuckin' odd, if you ask me. I love it.

- Jodi S.



PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

DATURA SEEDS

DATURA SEEDS 7"

Toxic Shock

Ex-Zero Boy Paul Mahern's Datura Seeds strut their stuff with "S&P '69," one of those classic pop tunes that's instantly recognizable, even as you're hearing it for the first time. The title stands for "Salt & Pepper" and it's a "Jungle Fever" type story about an interracial romance. A lyric insert would've been nice since it's hard to follow the narrative and I suspect the lyrics bear close reading. The B side, "D.A. Pop," is another catchy number. I hope these guys get out of Indiana and back on the road soon.

- Jim T.

DIRT 7"

Worry Bird Disk, Box 95485, Atlanta GA 30347

I admit I'm biased. Live, Atlanta's Dirt are one of the best things I've seen in many moons. Guitarist Jennifer Hensly-Moore knows how to stroke a wah-wah pedal while singer/rhythm guitarist John Forbes screams til his eye almost blow out of his sockets. All the while the rhythm section keeps the beat nailed down and pumping. This single doesn't come close to that live intensity but any fan of AmRep style grunge should seek this out and cherish it. Dirt are a band you should be aware of.

- Des Jr.

ELECTRIC FERRETS 7"

Dionysus

The first side, "2-3-4," has a Motorhead-sounding guitar riff if played in a more rockish vein, and silly vocals that didn't add up to much. Two more songs on the other side of this gray-colored 7-inch. Nope.

- Tom A.

ENGAGE 7"

Kirbdog, Box 286, Santa Rosa CA 95402

The third release on this growing California label takes a hard stance on the topic of exploiting the environment for economic gain on the A side. The B side, "Whoever Thought," is a pro-Vegan song exposing the violent side of human nature. Engage play power punk ala' Verbal Assault with evident mainstream influences like Rush. Both tracks are way too long and seem to lose some potency along the way. The production is way too grungy for 16-track. The packaging is ace, though, nice foldout poster packed with info and citing organizations and books for further investigation of their worthwhile beliefs.

- John L.

FASTBACKS Double 7"

Sub-Pop

More Fastbacks fun for those who can't get enough of their recent lp. "Impatience" is a great summer song, not quite girly-pop, not quite grunge. "Above The Sunrise" is a moody piece with quiet vocals and a spooky organ in the background. I like "My Letters" the best, just because it's so bouncy and peppy. There's also a cover of the Buzzcocks' "Whatever Happened To," done just as crash 'n burn as it was meant to be. Bop til you drop.

- Jodi S.

FINGER "Another State Of Mind" EP

Moist, Box 3597, Chapel Hill NC 27515

Fun poppy rock that doesn't really sound like anything in particular, but you can pick out influences here and there. "Another State" is catchy and radio friendly. The flipside songs are a little less so, but still cool and worth sinking your teeth into if you like music a little left of the mainstream.

- Jodi S.

FIDDLEHEAD

"Monemany"/"Circles" 7"

Wuxtry, c/o Kip Thomas, 132 Windmont Dr, Atlanta GA 30329

Fiddlehead hail from Georgia and are a four-piece flurry of guitars, drums, and emotive-vocal energy. Sort of an intenser, more 90's version of the Moving Targets. The vocalist sounds like a graver, more intellectual Stan Lee, singing in that introspective, "I'm Punk Yet Sensitive" lyrical style. If you want to picture Fiddlehead, just imagine Ian MacKaye, hands on his hips, fronting the Dickies, yelling "Can you guys ever be SERIOUS, man??"

- Terri

FUN NO FUN 7"

Self-released, no address available

These guys aren't quite as old as Iron Prostate, but they still put a dent in the bell curve that tracks the age of your average punk rocker. "I Wanna Be Your Problem" is a whiney Johnny Thunders-type punk rock ditty with catchy power chords and funny lyrics, and of course I loved every second of it. "Sinivation" on the B side is more of the same. Punk isn't dead, it's just getting a little gray.

- Jim T.

GASHOUNDS 7"

81 Warren St., Brooklyn NY 11201

The Gashounds' self-released cassette lp had a lot of countryish material on it, enough to make me think that was the direction this savvy NY combo was heading. But this single does a complete about face, going back to the jittery speedfreak rush of the Alter Boys, the group that first united 3/5 of the Gashounds. John Carruthers' adrenaline-soaked vocals stutter-step like a linebacker through a field of broken glass on "Dope My Sunday," while the B-side, "Pine'in," kicks off with a big juicy Velvets riff. This is as authentically New York Punk as the cigarette ash ground into the carpet at Max's Kansas City, just a whole lot fresher.

- Jim T.

GRISLY FICTION 7"

PO Box 53100, Philadelphia PA 19105

These songs are really interesting and get more so with repeated listenings, and indicate that this band has much more to offer. They would probably go over well live, worth checking out.

- Bill L.

GUTTERMOUTH "Balls" 7"

Dr. Strange, PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma CA 91701

Guttermouth churn out some uninspired, cheesy punk that reminds me of an early, thin-sounding Pajama Slave Dancers. In my opinion, the yellow vinyl could've been put to better use (although the picture on the B side is pretty funny).

- Tom A.

HONUS WAGNER "Las Vegas" 7"

Diesel Only, 100 N 6th St, Brooklyn NY 11211

A three-piece in the Railroad Jerk school of post-modern bluesy rock 'n roll. Terrific musicianship and ingratiating vocals make both of these tunes welcome guests at my house.

- Jim T.

HOUSE OF LARGE SIZES/TREEPEOPLE Split 7"

Toxic Shock

Both bands are into the jangly, noisy punk thing. Not much diversity but cool stuff just the same.

- Mike L.

INSPECTOR 12 "Jack" EP

THD, 2020 Seabury Ave, Minneapolis MN 55406

This is a good representation of what I-12 sounds like as a band, but it doesn't burn with the fury of their older stuff. Still, a cut about the rest if you like catchy midwestern hardcore.

- Jerod H.

LETCH PATROL/YOUTH GONE MAD Split 7"

(no address but try 81 2nd Ave, NYC 10003)

Letch Patrol are one of those goofy scum rock bands, but "Ode To Fred" (as in Flintstone) doesn't prove it. It's a slow, bass-heavy song, not much melody and the vocals buried way down there. Youth Gone Mad's side is way faster, goofier, and more fun, with two cuts: "Motorcycles" is my fave, just because it's so simple and stoopid.

- Jodi S.

LOST/PAIN TEENS Split 7"

Spank, 8002 Driftwood Dr, Erie PA 16511

Erie, PA's Lost (not to be confused with the NYC metal band on Giant Records) go in a different direction on "Killswitch," putting aside their fast, hard, Replacements-esque grungey rock moves for a slow, introspective ballad with an emotional vocal by lead singer Brian. The Pain Teens take the traditional folk ballad "Hangman's Rope" and turn it into a pseudo-industrial drone dirge, with clanging percussion effects ringing out behind an electro-distorted vocal from hell.

- Jim T.

MALICE IN WONDERLAND

"Drug War Babies" 7"

Booze Fighter

This is a cross between the Ramones and the Fluid. But it rocks. I like it.

- Jerod H.

MANDRAKES

"Put Them Up As Lights"/"I Go With You" 7"

Susstones

This band should get rid of the guys singing. They sound so retro-Sixties, it's disgusting. However, when the female vocalist shows up in "I Go With You," things pick up DRAMATICALLY. She's no Natalie Merchant, but her style and inflection match up well with the folk/pop sound of the instruments. Not quite my style, but impressive.

- Jamie T.

MANUAL SCAN

"Days & Maybes" EP

Susstones

Swingin' back into da groove scene, we got the new 'un from Bart Mendoza's Manual Scan. These forefathers of the San Diego mod scene are, perhaps, the last of a dying breed. Nevertheless, eight years strong and running, comes the new offering of their familiar 6T's pop sound. Being the true successor to the Zombies school of pop that Bart is, this EP will surely please fans of Squire, The Byrds, or (even) The Mod Fun. And as a side note to anyone who's been following M.S. for these past 8 years, this release is way more along the lines of their first "Plan Of Action" 7 inch than the HiLo released lp. If you're a Mod, or just look like one, DO get this! It's SwlnGiN', Cats!

- Mick London

MOSS ICON

"Memorial" 7" EP

Vermin Scum, 76 Summerfield Dr, Annapolis MD 21403

Very well-sung vocals about freedom and such, set to slow college-radio type music. The drummer makes good use of his crash cymbal, I noticed. This starts slow but it gets rockin'.

- Jerod H.

MONSTER ZERO

"My Kingdom/Dream" / "Visions Of You" 7"
Rocket Sound

To say that these guys were influenced by the Dickies and Descendents might be a bit of a snap judgment. Monster Zero has quite a handle on instrumental melody, and a second listen to this pulled out a more subtle X influence than you'd expect. Very catchy. The vocals are a little shaky but hey, they're having too much fun to care. A good showing.

- Jamie T.

MOTHER LOAD 4-song 7"

Empty

Kinda funky garage stuff. I guess one indication of a good song is if it's fun to think about even when you're not listening to it, and three of these make it for me.

- Bill L.

MR. T EXPERIENCE "Love American Style" 7"

Lookout

I've always liked MTX. They play a cool '77 pop punk sound with really good vocals and simple, catchy melodies. They also haven't changed much over the years. This single sounds like it could have come from their first session years ago, altho the vocals here are a bit different. "Love American Style" is a cool cut (from their next lp, I think). The B side, "Somebody Wants To Love You" (a Partridge Family cover) and "The Spiderman Theme" are recorded and played well, but why they are played at all is beyond me. Fans will dig this, but fer chrissakes, guys, don't you ever do anything different?

- John L.

P-1-9 "Look Again" EP

Ice, PO Box 020154, Brooklyn NY 11201

Three-fourths of P-1-9 were in the early ABC No Rio-scene band Product 19, which explains the name. Unfortunately this is the kind of NY/HC that I like least - old school, Agnostic Front-type thrash with growled vocals and heavy guitars. There are some eyebrow-raising touches, like the Clapton lead guitar line on "Common Criminal" or the Clash-y thump to "Privacy For Sale," but overall this is the sort of music that needs a roomful of colliding bodies to bring it to life.

- Jim T.

PARASITES

"Paramania" EP and "En Homage aux Beatles" EP
Shredder

After years of inactivity, the Parasites have been churning out EP's and compilation tracks faster than the you can "Love Me Do." Speaking of which, "En Homage aux Beatles" is a 3-song EP commemorating the anniversary of the Beatles' last concert. There's a Nikki Parasite original written in the style of the Beatles (and recorded on grungy home 4-track, making it sound like something from 1962), a note-for-note cover of "I Feel Fine" and, a much better cover of "Paperback Writer" which infuses the Parasites' own personality into the song. The "Paramania" EP is the payoff for all this recent work; it's the most original and striking thing the band has ever done. No more copped Ramones riffs or Misfits effects, the two songs on this baby are fully-realized and impeccably crafted pop tunes that are 100% Parasites. If their forthcoming lp lives up to the standards they've set here, watch out, world.

- Jim T.

PITBULL 7"

Tantrum, PO Box 657, Cambridge MA 02238

Great shit. Alan Reynolds' vocals alone make this a worthwhile slab. He's got one of the strongest voices I've heard, plus a cool British accent. The lyrics to both sides of this single have a real dark sense of humor; for example, "Don't push me, I'm a regular guy/I'm not Prince Charming, I'm just ham on rye." By all means.

- Mike L.

POISON BONE

"Trash Can Pussy" 7"

Booze Fighter

Whereas the title track is frighteningly reminiscent of the stuff being spewed out by every misogynistic glamfag metal band in the Top 40, the flipside, called "Firecracker," is an honorable attempt at the grungerock genre. It's a little sloppy, sure, but if they drop the cheesey bad boy act and concentrate on the music, they might actually go places. Book these boys on a train to Seattle and they'll be fine.

- Leif

POLVO Double 7"

Kitchen Puff, 696 N Columbia, Chapel Hill NC 27514

Really good songs, altho sometimes it's hard to tell because they pack so much sound into each one. But it's exactly this density that keeps bringing me back for more listens - the feeling that I'm going to discover something really important in between all the guitar sounds, like maybe the secret to eternal life or maybe to extended multiple orgasms.

- Bill L.

POOCH

"Anyway The Wind Blows" / "One Sunny Day" 7"

Flipside

Stiff Records - anybody remember that label? You know, home of early Elvis Costello, Wreckless Eric and Nick Lowe. It this were 1979, Pooch would be on Stiff. He's got a neat pop sensibility, similar to later-period Alex Chilton (as a matter of fact, "One Sunny Day" sounds a bit like Chilton's "Bangkok.")

Unfortunately, the HEINOUS production holds the record back.. WAY back. The guitars sound pseudo-slick and cheesed out, and most annoying is this big-ass big-drum studio sound. Yeesh!

Yeah, if this were 1979, Pooch would be on Stiff. But this is 1991; Pooch edits poetry at Flipside magazine.

- Terri



POPDEFECT 7"

Dionysus

From Popdefect comes a mega-hip, dark-splattered, swirly colored two song single. There's enough changes and hooks for people with even the shortest attention span. The songs have a definite "pop" flavor, and lean toward the college radio side of things, but there's no wimpy shit here. Strong songwriting and musicianship make this trio sound a lot meatier than some four-piece bands. This is better than their single on Flipside too.

- Tom A.

POUCH "Rock Is Good" 7"

Rockville

I was all set to hate this record, it being on cheesy Rockville Records. But it turned out to be exactly the sort of thing I go nuts over -- a freaky trio of loud, fast rock 'n rollers with a lunatic lead vocal and lots of snappy riffs. "Charlie McCarthy" is good enough to make me mention Mercyland and Squirrel Bait, while "The Rabbit" on the flipside reminded me of primo Soul Asylum. Good shit.

- Jim T.

RISE ABOVE

"B Is For Boston" 7" EP

Stand As One, BP 77, 75623 Paris Cedex 13, France

Great cover art, a ripoff from one of the live Kiss lps. This band plays straight out, straightedge hardcore. The band is from Belgium and they really owe nothing to the likes of Gorilla Biscuits or Youth Of Today. A heavy SSD influence is obvious, but that's okay because it's their favorite band. Four songs in all, putting the stomp on meat-eating, sexism, a cover of an old DYS song, and they only pressed 350 of these. This is their farewell record, watch out for future projects.

- Mike L.

SEAM 7"

Homestead

Ken Katkin and I usually disagreed over matters of taste when he was writing for Jersey Beat. Now that he's running Homestead, things haven't changed much (Love Child? I don't think so). But our ex-Singles Editor has released at least one great single with this indie rock supergroup (one Bitch Magnet, one Superchunk, and one Lillies). I'm not a big proponent of "Slow Rock" (ala' Galaxie 500 or, more currently, Codeine) but the three tracks here sizzle and snap like a Fourth of July sparkler, throwing off bits of jagged sound with a range of guitar effects that's simply dazzling. This is one drone that'll swallow you up whole but not put you to sleep.

- Jim T.



PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ

SEVERIN 7"

Super Bad/Dischord, PO Box 53321, Wash DC 20009

Yet another great new D.C. band working the fringes of post-hardcore. The gushing vocals almost remind me of Superchunk's Mac, while the creative guitar riffing and excellent drum sound promise great things ahead. Maybe they'll do an lp and I'll actually get to see them play before they break up.

- Jim T.

SHONEN KNIFE "Secret No. 712" 7"

Rockville

"Lazybone" is the cutest song these kids have ever done, and now they can play their instruments a bit better. It's an ode to being lazy, and a damned hummable tune. The flip is "Blue Oyster Cult," sounding like a leftover from 1964. I'm not saying this is the best band around (like some members of the rock underground I could name) but they are enjoyable if you don't think of them as "artists."

- Jodi S.

SMASHING ORANGE 7"

Ringers Lactate, Box 5012, Long Island City NY 11105

These young'uns from Delaware (I'm talking kids here!) put out this deranged single back in January called "My Deranged Heart," which made A&R dudes from every major sit up straight and pay attention. "Not Very Much" on this single isn't as totally enchanting, but it's close. Even tho it's more formulaic than the first one, at least it doesn't try to copycat My Bloody Valentine, like "Deranged" hinted at. This one's more grungy, and there's still a lot of wah wah. Instead of the dreaminess of the first release, this one sounds like a Sub Pop release.

- Jodi S.

STEELPOLE BATHTUB "Venus In Furs"/"European Son"

Communion, PO Box 95265, Atlanta GA 30347

If I had to think of a worthy heir to the Velvet Underground's heroin-grunge fuzz, it'd be Steelpole Bathtub, one of the most exciting and innovative "noise" bands around. Amazingly, the two San Franciscan dudes who front the band even find authentically nasal Noo Yawk accents for the vocals on these tracks (I can't figure out if it's Mike or Dale singing, and the sleeve doesn't say, but it might as well be Uncle Lou.) One of my favorite new bands covering one of my favorite all-time bands... yes, I guess you could say I liked this one.

- Jim T.

SUGARTIME 7"

Ringers Lactate

When I first heard this, it didn't hit me like a ton of bricks. But now that I've listened to it a little more, it's growing on my. "Girlcrash" is a totally cool, feel goody song, all summery and warm with a guitar hook that sucks you into the song headfirst. "Psych-Mail" is slower and more atonal, with a guitar chime way in the back. I think the singer sounds a little like Jim from Das Damen. They kick ass live and members include former members of Nice Strong Arm, Pavement and Swans. In case you were wondering, they sound like none of those groups.

- Jodi S.

SUPERCHUNK

"Breadman"/"Cast Iron" (Matador)

"Cool"/"Fishing" (Merge)

Superchunk can't play a bad song, I'm convinced of it. "Breadman" makes me happy to be a kid; if I was older, I'd look stupid dancing to this. Typical S'chunk fare, speedy drums and burning guitars that raise your blood pressure.

"Cast Iron" is more melodic with a great bass hook. "Cool" is more 'Chunkness; they're cooler than you, and you know it. I heard this on the radio once and the deejay couldn't think of anything to say. Neither can I, my brain is numb. "Fishing" woke me right up, fast and almost punk/hardcore. One of my favorite singles of the year (number 10,000,000,000, I think) and so amazing I'm gonna kiss Mac's feet next time I see him.

- Jodi S.

SUPERSTAR DAN THEMAN 7"

Scat

Pretty oddball stuff - spoken word, but not really. It's chanted, yelled, whispered, screamed, and ranted word. And it's good. And weird. And chilling. Stuff to make your friends go "Huh?" and your roommates think you're a psychopath.

- Jodi S.

SUPERSUCKERS

"Junk" 7"

Empty, PO Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102

Jeez, this stuff is hard to describe. The music sounds like Crimpshrine if they were on Sub-Pop. Ultra-distorted guitar and cool, constipated vocals. No lyric sheet so it's difficult to pass judgment on their political correctness, but I'll tell ya, the title tune is a ripper. Mid-tempo madness, if you will. This is enough to make me want to hear more.

- Mike L.

TERRORCAKE 4-song EP

Footlong

The band has hardcore chops but the post-modern femme vocals are more in the Siouxsie/goth vein, with a faraway, slightly eerie quality that clashes with the straight ahead mosh guitars and drums. Kind of interesting but not really my cup of camomile.

- Jim T.

THOSE MELVINS

"Wasted Hippies," EP

Turn Of The Century

I listened to this twice but barely retained any of it except "Poser Polka," which is memorable -- memorably bad!

- Des Jr.

UNREST

"This Is A Factory Record" (Sub-Pop)

"Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl" + 2 (K)

"Cherry Cherry"/"Wednesday And Proud" (Teenbeat)

"This Is A Factory Record" is a Sub Pop Singles Club release, but I'm telling you, sniff it out. Mug your bratty cousin Steven for it. Unrest covers four Factory Records bands and shit, it's weird. Being unfamiliar with the originals, I really can't compare this to them, all I can say is that this is a neat little single.

"Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl" is one of my favorite songs this year, cemented by the fact that I bought it after hearing it for the first time live from Mr. Unrest, Mark Robinson. The song is the greatest, it sticks in your head for days! A simple guitar hook, one that would knock Material Issue on their asses, and if you could say "fuck" on the radio, this would be playin' on every college station in America. "Hydroplane" (a cover, I think) is kind of monotone, and "Feeling Good Fixation" is Galaxie 500-chime crossed with Beach Boy vocals. A must-have.

Finally, "Cherry Cherry" is a German-import, more pop fun from a band that was called too hardcore by a club in my college town. This is a cover too, same type of bouncy guitars and that air of innocence as "Skinhead Girl." The flip is a quiet, slow, bass-heavy, Galaxie 500-ish song.

- Jodi S.

WRONG ANSWER

"Zoo Breath" 7"

% Steve Wishart, 2993 Cedar Mill Crossing, Acworth GA 30101

This is really interesting. Each song represents a different musical taste. The first is in the D.C. vein, the second is just a 3-chord punk song, third is a ska ditty... Well, anyway, Wrong Answer covers a bunch of different areas of music and all are worth a listen.

- Jerod H.

BENEFIT FOR BEER Compilation 7"

Seaweed, PO Box 20691 Tompkins Sq Sta, NYC 10009

Anyone who's seen any of the bands on this compilation will agree that the title is all too fitting. Hordes of empty funnels and hands cupped for change are an all too common sight at their shows. The best song here goes to the Deviators, their vinyl debut, with a straightforward guitar-driven ditty with excellent lyrics. Next is Jesus Chrust, with a manic, aggressive thrasher, not to mention lyrics straight out of Dante's Inferno. I might get called a pseudo-party dog, but the other two bands, Casualties and Public Nuisance, didn't do anything for me. Worth giving a listen, though.

- Tom A.

COMPILATIONS

BROUHAHA 7" compilation

Piggly Wiggly, Box 326, Berkeley CA 94701

You'd be foolish to miss out on this one. You get Jawbreaker, who always rule; Nuisance; and Cringer and Monsula, who do cover tunes of each others' songs. Every band gives its own personal and unique style of pop, melodic punk. Strike up a hit for Piggly Wiggly.

- Tom A.

LOVE AND NAPALM 7" compilation

Trance Syndicate

I had always wondered who put out records like this and now I know. Now about the record: "Original bands" would be a lie, but "bands trying to be original" is perfect. Not my cup of tea.

- Jerod H.

LUBE JOB - 7" compilation EP

Rust, PO Box 81942, Pittsburgh PA 15217

Rust Records' first release is a 4-band, 4-song compilation of Pittsburgh hc bands (except for SFA from NYC). Necracedia (excellent lyrics and music) and Doomwatch (well executed hardcore) are the best of the bunch, while Submachine's song might have been better but the singer sounded held back and lacked the necessary conviction in his voice. SFA isn't my cup of tea.

- Tom A.

THERE'S A FAGGOT IN THE PIT 7" compilation

Bobo, PO Box 326, Berkeley CA 94701

A totally refreshing and exciting 5-song compilation makes Bobo's first release a killer. Included in the packaging are coherent, well-written essays on homophobia, conformity and sexism. Musically, Glee Club and Good Grief play catchy pop punk, digressing into emo. Filth, California's nerve-racking kings of drugcore, do a really good-sounding live cut. Up To Here seem to have a NJ pop/rock/punk/oi sound to them, while All You Can Eat steal the show with a mid-paced, quirky but rocking profanity-filled track called "Inconsistencies." Grab this one.

- John L.



Photography by Sam Lahoz



HEAD'S UP



FUNK FACE

by Rodney Leighton

Welcome to the third installment of this cassette-only column. Pretty cool that Jersey Beat has been around for nine years, huh? Me, I figure that for the tenth anniversary, Jim should throw an all-expenses paid party in, oh, say Hawaii for all the staff. I look forward to it. Up here in the wilds of Nova Scotia, it's been hot and dry most of the summer. Yesterday it started raining. And so...

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN - 4 song demo
PO Box 391, New Brunswick NJ 08903

A huge ensemble -- 10 people, about a dozen instruments - which produces a wild and interesting sound. "Hanukkah Medley" is a batch of Hungarian folk songs; "Lonesome Valley" is, of course, an old standard hymn but done sort of differently. The other two pieces are instrumentals, one sort of like jazz and one sort of experimental. An interesting mix.

THE BLANKS - "It's Pure Punk" cassette
1303 Myrtle St, Hillside NJ 07205

I'm tempted to leave it at the title: seven punk rock songs, well done for this genre. "Spirit Of '77" pines for a time I didn't know. I appreciated the song called "Jehovah's Witness." Punks should get this one.

BLACK DAHLIA - "Red Like Rome" cassette
PO Box 253, Willingboro NJ 08046

Six songs by this Philly-based four-piece which has been together one and a half years. Seems like more and more stuff is difficult to categorize. This demo has elements of pop, punk, rock, metal and probably some other things. Quite good, really. "Jihad" is likely the best piece. Sufficiently good that I'm anticipating their next demo with eagerness.

THE CLINTS - "Whatever Happened To Kimberley Drummond?" cassette
PO Box 88, Hollywood CA 90068

Three guys named Clint doing what I call fun folk/pop. This is a three-song tape. "Kimberley Drummond" is about that young lady from "Diff'rent Strokes." "Gender Blur" is an interesting song about youth and its indistinguishableness. "Stepfather" is about just that -- a lousy stepfather. Good stuff.

DUF DAVIS & THE BOOK CLUB - demo

51 Grover Avenue, Princeton NJ 08540
Six short pieces of humorous folk music. Sort of cute, sort of silly.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT - Demo

1415 Main St #720, Worcester MA 01603

A ten-song release from three guys who are actually from California, despite the address on the tape. Reasonably decent, although nothing really grabbed me. On the other hand, after eight plays, I'm not sick of it either. Quite a variety of material. "Six Feet Under" seems to be Christian inspired; on the other hand, one song is called "Coke Snorting Love Days." Somewhere in the pop/rock/punk stratum.

THE FENWICKS - "Another Deadly Mother"/"Member Of No Tribe"

30 E 9th St #37, New York NY 10003

A cassette with both tunes on each side of the tape. Sort of like Irish folk songs but done as pop rock. I know it doesn't make sense but that's the best way I can describe it.



THE GREY SPIKES - "Sex & Hate" cassette
21610 Reynolds Dr, Torrance CA 90503

Punk pop which is, I think, intended for humor - but perhaps with a message. The 18 songs vary a lot, some being almost radio-ready rock, others pure punk. "Sleaze-O-Rama" is interesting. Quite well done and worth a few listens.

LAUGHING BOY - "Three"

No address

Just what it says, a three song demo. Easy listening rock sounds like a ridiculous statement but that's the phrase that keeps occurring to me. Fairly basic four-piece band, I like the song "Marianne."

THE ORDINARY BOYS

2 Glenridge Ave, No Brunswick NJ 08902

Three song demo. A well-chosen name for these guys. Sounds ok, sung decently, instruments are well played. But they are just -- ordinary.

MJB90 - "Wonder Bread World"

PO Box 316, Cooper Station, NYC 10276

A dozen songs here from the one-man show that is Michael Bowman. This stuff sounds like it was produced by entire orchestras when, in fact, one guys does it all, with a little help. The music ranges from pure pop to some sort of deranged garage punk screaming to experimental stuff. Songs with a message, made with care. A true labor of love.

MONET'S GARDENS - "Pray" cassette

4432 Telegraph Ave #83, Oakland CA 94609

This one is good. College rock done in a gothic style. A full 12-song, album-length release running nearly 55 minutes. A variety of instrumentation including flute, piano, sax & violin adds interesting nuances to the fine, if somewhat dark, vocals. Probably headed for commercial success.

SPINE - "Subliminal Wise Guy" cassette
PO Box 372, Willingboro NJ 08046

This is one of those experimental noise things, full of samples and gruns and groans and so forth. Try writing a half-decent review of this when you have a splitting headache. Ten pieces on the "Wise Guy" side; ten more on the other side, entitled "Lucky Lucky You." If you're into experimental noise you'll probably like this.

THD - "Sucky Promo Device #1" cassette
2020 Seabury Ave, Minneapolis MN 55406

This is a promo tape for five bands on the THD label, most of them in the thrash metal vein. Inspector 12 and Fury both have singles on the label just out. Don't play this if you have a headache.

WOOLRIDGE BROTHERS - "My Excuse" cassette
564 W Rogers St, Milwaukee WI 53204

The Brothers Woolridge left The Squares to do a country band and make this ten-song, cassette-only release. A very good tape, with clean, well-sung, intense and meaningful lyrics backed by excellent guitar and a bit more. It's impossible to tell there's a drummer in this group. A goody!

CIVIL ALLEN

"Playing With The World On Fire" and "Peregrination"
PO Box 1791, Bensalem PA 19020

I'm going to pay Mike Gunderloy a compliment here and steal a line from him: "Sort of like protest tunes for the AM spectrum." The eight numbers on "World On Fire" are all tunes you might hear on an AM station either very early in the morning or very late at night. Definitely pop songs but with a cutting edge of protest and strong lyrics which will likely keep them from mainstream radio play. Very good stuff, really. The "Peregrination" tape is a short sample of Allen's instrumental work, composed and recorded using a couple of synths and rudimentary equipment. Flights of fancy and imagination brought to life quite well.

GAS HUFFER

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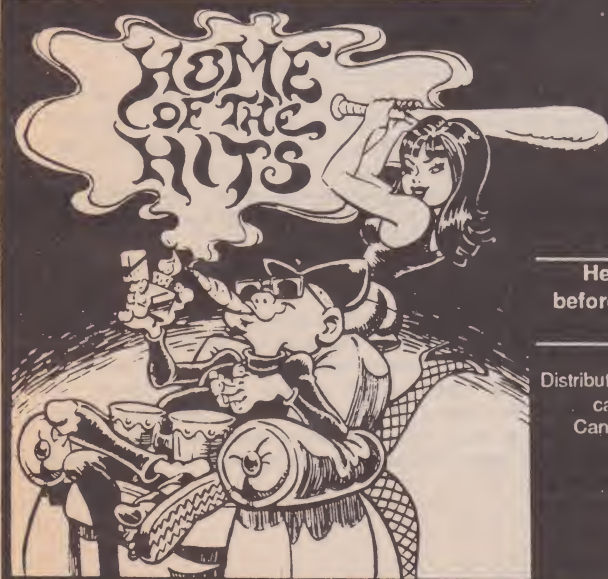
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by Wayne Garcia

I met up with Motel Shootout after hours at City Limits, a guitar shop in New Brunswick, but wound up talking mostly with Keith Hartel, the band's singer, guitarist and main songwriter. We talked about Keith's past with Pleased Youth, Adrenalin O.D. (both of whom had releases on Buy Our Records), the Nymphs (now signed to Geffen) and his current thang, Motel Shootout.

Q: How long as Motel Shootout been together, and how has the lineup shifted since the beginning?

Keith: Ok, how long have we been a band? We started out in April of last year. We started with Ray Kubian on drums, Jeff Surawaski on bass, and me on guitar and vocals. After a couple of practices, Jeff lost his mind. He suffered a breakdown, a mental collapse.

Jeff: I truly had a breakdown. And I felt that I had to give up music.

Keith: So one day we're going to practice and it looks like we've finally got our three-piece ready to go and Jeff gives me this big thing that, not only does he have to quit the band, no, he has to quit music.

Q: Jeff, what were you thinking? I'm trying to think back to that time...

Jeff: I was just having a lot of pressures on me. I just had all these pressures closing in on me.

Q: When was this in time? How long was it after the second version of Littlehood broke up? (Littlehood, for those who missed its two short-lived incarnations, consisted of Keith, Don Bruno of Loose, Jeff, Joel Weisberger of Bruce Wayne, and myself.)

Keith: After Littlehood, there was a tailspin period. I don't even remember when the Littlehood breakup was. It was in September, September '89. After that, Jeff and I were still playing together. We tried a lot of things. Eventually we heard about Ray.

Q: How did you hear about Ray? Because I think he's integral, he's the glue.

'We're trying to
aspire to a higher
level of screwball
gig'

MOTEL SHOOTOUT

photos by Jim Testa

Keith: Well, our friend Paul Decolator, he had just formed Loose with Don from Littlehood, Paul, and two newcomers from Hillsboro, John Yursha and Mike Faherty. They had this friend, Ray, from their neighborhood, and they said, "You're starting a band? Call our friend Ray." So eventually, just to get them to stop telling me that, I called him.

Q: Ray, you were a youngster then.

Keith: He's a youngster now.

Q: How old are you?

Ray: I'm 19.

Q: Keith, how old are you now?

Keith: I'm 23.

Q: And Jeff?

Jeff: I'm 41. (Everyone laughs)

Q: So anyway...

Jeff: To round things out, Stu Weinberg (bass) is the same age as Keith.

Keith: When Jeff cut out, I made a phone call to Stu. So then things started to click and I knew that Jeff would eventually see that it was a bad move to quit.

Q: You recorded a demo as a three piece. How many gigs did you do?

Keith: We played three gigs as a three piece.

Jeff: In those three gigs, I had the opportunity to become a fan of the band that I had quit, and then rejoining the band that I had become a fan of.

Keith: It was never my ideal to have a three piece band.

Q: Why did you want a three piece to start with?

Keith: I always thought that the two guitars, bass and rum was the ideal rock lineup. The reason we got a three piece was just because I wanted to get something together and I wanted to deal with as few people as I could. I just wanted to write, I didn't want to deal with the weird competition that comes up in bands a lot with two writers, which I had dealt with already. There's always that tension. Nobody wants to say "I want to do all my songs," but you can see.

Q: I think that anybody who is in a band who writes songs, if they have a song they want to do, they want the band to do it. And when that becomes a problem...

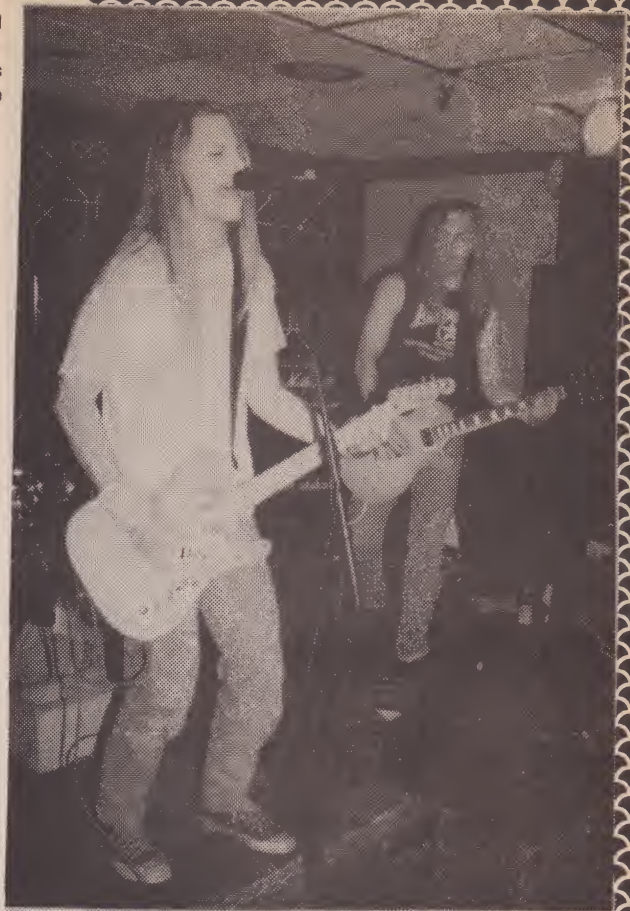
Keith: Yeah, it's weird. I didn't want to deal with any more of that than necessary. I also wanted to show myself that I could really play guitar in a band. In Littlehood, my guitar was never a prominent part of the sound. I just wanted to prove that to myself, but it was never my ideal working situation.

Q: When did Jeff come back?

Keith: Last August.

Q: When did you start writing songs? You didn't write anything in Pleaséd Youth.

Keith: Toward the end, there were a couple of things we did live.



'You can't say enough good things about the Court. I would say the Court Tavern is almost solely responsible for any sort of original music scene that's going on in New Brunswick'

Q: And you wrote in the first Littlehood, with Don also writing stuff.

Keith: I had a band in Los Angeles with Mike from TMA and that was 50/50.

Jeff: That was Motel Shootout West.

Keith: Yeah, that was called Motel Shootout.

Q: So to bring things up to date, you're doing a lot of gigs at the Court Tavern in New Brunswick.

Jeff: You can't say enough good things about the Court. I would say the Court Tavern is almost solely responsible for any sort of original music scene that's going on in New Brunswick.

Q: I think the show there on June 29 was the best I'd ever seen you. The set is really getting together.

Keith: I think Kirk, the soundman at the Court, is very responsible for the good sound there.

Q: You did some new songs at that show. I think there's definitely a difference in the stuff you're doing now from the first demo.

Keith: For a really long time...

Q: Do you still do any songs from that demo?

Keith: We do the song "No Title." I always wanted to do something in that rock and roll style, kind of more of a groove.

Q: You've been in some, let's call them "punk" bands, and that was one thing I was thinking of. Your progression from being in Pleased Youth to what you're doing now.

Keith: Around the time we recorded with Pleased Youth, I started listening to T Rex, the albums The Slider and Electric Warrior, and I thought that was the coolest sound in the world: the electric guitar with the acoustic and that groove. Real good songs. To me, that was just a great sound.

Q: I think T Rex and David Bowie are your most apparent influences. How do you feel about it when people can tag your influences like that?

Keith: I don't. On certain songs. I don't feel it's true with everything. But there are certain songs that are obviously T Rex style. Especially the T Rex stuff, because (Marc Bolan's) style was so distinctive.

Q: A lot of his stuff was pretty similar.

Keith: Yeah, to itself. I always wanted to play music like that. So few people have listened to T Rex that they don't get it anyway. I think if we play for a length of time, if I keep writing, that eventually it'll come to a point where I'll make more of a unique contribution.

Q: Where do you see it going? Do you see any direction happening as far as what you're going to do?

Jeff: As far as direction goes of the overall music, this is really the first band I was ever in where the music is either right there or it's heading someplace where it's going to be right there.

(laughs)

Keith: Well, being 17 and listening to T Rex in my car and now to be at a point where I can do that is satisfying to me right now. After a little while, I'm going to want to do something else. We all are. That's when I think either we'll start copying something else or maybe do something more...

Q: When you come up with a song, how does it get to be a Motel Shootout song?

Keith: Usually I'll think of a little hook part, usually a vocal melody, and then the melody dictates how the chords and the backing is going to go. Usually, I'll start thinking of words before all the music is done, then it all comes together. I have a four-track recorder now so I can really flesh out a lot of the parts.

Jeff: Because Keith writes the songs, it helps get the idea across. He doesn't have to sit in a room with us for 20 minutes and say "this part should go like this...no, like this." By making a demo, things move a lot faster.

Keith: Of course, everyone puts in their style.

Q: Ray's backing vocals are great, what about them?



Keith: Before I had the four track, Ray did it. If I had to make a generalization, I'd say it's something we work out together.

Jeff: Ray thinks very musically.

Q: When people see you live, what do you think they get out of Motel Shootout?

Jeff: As long as the melody comes through.

Q: You guys are a crack outfit.



Keith: We're trying to aspire to a higher level of a screwball gig.

Q: Keith, any words about your time in Adrenalin O.D.?

Keith: I was a fan of AOD. I got to join them and tour the country with them. The stage experience, playing on as many stages and in some cases in front of a lot of people, it got me to a point where I was really comfortable on stage.

Q: In Littlehood, you started writing and then you were the singer.

Keith: That's when I started writing the first songs I liked.

Q: How did you wind up in the Nymphs (who are signed to Geffen and whose lead singer's antics have been featured in Rolling Stone)?

Keith: I didn't have any ideas about what to do in NJ. A friend knew that they needed a bass player and my girlfriend and I were thinking of moving to California. Inger is from New Jersey (the Nymph's singer). They were going to do demos for A&M. A&M and Geffen were interested in them at the time. I talked to her on the phone and listened to their demo. And the next thing you know, there I was on a plane to Los Angeles.

Q: As far as quitting, what was the deal behind that?

Keith: She's, as far as the stuff you read in Rolling Stone, she's difficult to work with. She's got problems.

Q: Does she have serious problems or contrived problems?

Keith: Serious. She does and I don't even mean that to be derogatory.

Q: You could tell from "Bad Influence" (the Nymphs appeared in the James Spader/Rob Lowe film) she had real demons.

Keith: For the Nymphs, they had it together and they had their priorities, which are the singer and the songs. The band are all good players in their way. She could be rough on the guys in the band and I had the idea in the back of my mind of singing and playing in my own band. So eventually, I quit the band because of some situation that came up with me and her, where she did this or that, but it was really an excuse to try things with my own band.

Q: Do you have other recording plans for Motel Shootout?

Keith: This is a conversation I've had a lot lately because it's a really hot time. You have Loose getting signed out of town right now and Nude Swirl signing with Mega Force for management, and they're either gonna put them on the label or get them another major label deal. And in general, there's a lot of hubbub.

Q: You're not thinking of putting out your own single, going that route?

Keith: If I felt that we had gone through every avenue, then I would think about maybe putting out our own record. The one thing that keeps me going is if you look at us now compared to a year ago, there is really a great change. I feel the longer it takes to get a deal going, the better the first impression is going to be on the general public. It takes time. I just have a certain idea in my head of what the band could be and so I'm not in a big hurry. And I'm not in a big hurry to record again. Whether I want to record again is when I feel we have a batch of songs that outdate the last tape. But hey, lookout!

THE fiendz

by Tom Brebric

Introduction

Ever since their debut single, "We're The Fiendz," showed up in the singles rack at Bleecker Bob's, The Fiendz have been one of NJ's most promising up and coming bands. With a tight, hooky sound bursting with infectious, singalong melodies, and a no-frills, non-stop stage show full of energy, The Fiendz have grown from a cute trio of talented high school kids to one of the best known underground bands in the Garden State.

Meet the Fiendz: Jerry Jones on lead vocals and guitar, Jimmy on bass, and Joe on drums.

Q: The artwork on your first two 7-inches (done by Joe) had an obvious Misfits influence, with black and white horror comix imagery. Since your music doesn't come across that way, why that choice?

The Misfits were our heroes... a neighbor of mine was cousins with them and they'd always visit and they gave us stuff. It wasn't a horror thing, it was more a fun image for us. We like the simplicity of b&w and it's cheaper, which is why we used it in the past. On the new album, we're using more color and our artwork is going to be different.

Q: If the new lp going to be on your Black Pumpkin label?

No, we've had it with Black Pumpkin. It's run by us and it's too much work running a label and being in a band. We've always wanted to get out of it, it was our alter motive for putting out our own music. The new lp is going to be called "Wacted" and it's going to be on Forefront Records out of Hoboken, NJ. It's be released on lp, cassette and CD with bonus tracks on the CD and cassette.

Q: How did the Forefront deal come about?

Black Pumpkin and Forefront worked together closely on the "We're The Fiendz" and "Dead Endz" records. Mike [Young] from Forefront did a lot of the distribution and stuff overseas for us. He's the only guy who's been on the level with us and whom we trust.

Q: When the Fiendz started in 1987, Joe, you were only about 15 years old. Did your age present problems for the band?

Joe: Yeah, we were getting active in the clubs and my parents didn't understand what was going on. A lot of stuff was done on school time. When we did the lp, the guy supervising it called me out of school and I played hooky a lot. We do a lot of all-ages shows but the fact that we're young never really bothered us.



Q: What are some of the things you did to get established as a band?

Promoting ourselves was the #1 thing. We got out of school on Fridays to put up posters announcing our gigs, we played anywhere that came our way, even metal clubs, and we pushed our t-shirts in school. To this day, we keep in touch with the people who write us from fanzines. It's like every scene grows into a bigger scene for us.

Q: I'm curious what the new album will sound like. Your older releases seem to have a continuity to them, will the new album follow the same path?

Most of our older stuff was written by Jerry while he was still in high school. By the time we got to record it, well, you know, we just wanted to get the old ones out of the way. Most of the new cuts were written on the road and in hotel rooms.

Q: Who's producing the new lp?

We are. We did the last single ("Dead Endz") too. We're so set in our ways that a producer would just annoy us.

Q: What did you learn from your experiences with the do-it-yourself singles that you put out?

It was a lot of fun being in high school and putting those 7 inches out.

Q: Do you think you'll do more of them?

They're not that popular as they used to be, and the bigger distributors don't even carry them anymore. The distributors will carry CDs and we have to change with the times. I think we might do another one, though it's more expensive to do them and tougher to find places to do them in small quantities.

Q: Now it's time to ask about something you've kept a low profile about till now... What exactly happened this past year with your tour with the Undead, specifically Bobby Steele?

Initially, we figured we'd let that question slide after we got back from the tour. But Bobby started telling rumors that our band had broken up. We were warned about him, that he steals, that he lies, etc. We said, "he's cool," and in the beginning he was. He brought us out of NJ and into Pennsylvania and other places. He was in the Misfit and never got any of those royalties and he feels like everybody owes him. When we went on tour with him, it was like, Carry my bags, do this and do that, like being the roadies. After we found ourselves apologizing for his behavior towards the light and soundmen, etc, we felt he was giving us a bad name.

On the second tour, when we got to Kansas, Bobby got into a fight and got his head kicked in, and he was pissed that we didn't help him out. But we didn't even know about it till he came on stage bleeding and yelling for security. Before that, we were in Dallas and he told us he didn't have the money to put us up in a hotel, so we paid and he said he'd pay us back in the morning. But by then, he was gone. We got our stuff together and filled up the van and went to do the rest of the tour. We found out from the promoter that Bobby took off for NJ. The promoter contacted Bobby and Bobby told him that we should fend for ourselves.

Q: Did you ever have the opportunity to confront Bobby about any of this?



You can't kill someone one's already dead. We could have come home and whatever, but I called him after the tour, he said there's no money... yeah, because he spent it all on hotels and steak dinners. Now he's putting out all these ads for drummers and bass players. He takes all the money and uses it for himself. We have to forget, people warned us not to do a tour with that guy but we wanted to play down South and the Midwest. When we were on tour with the Undead, we were doing two sets a night, the Fiendz and then as The Undead [backing up Bobby]. We were helping him out, but he felt we owed him for getting us those shows. We could've done that on our own. He cancelled the rest of the tour by calling up clubs and telling them that we couldn't make it because the Fiendz were breaking up. He lied to us, the bottom line is that he totally ripped us off and I hope he suffers for a long time.

Q: What's new and upcoming for The Fiendz?

We're trying to do shows and space them out between cities while doing the new album. We don't have to beg for gigs anymore, we've got the CD coming out and a budget to work with. We hope to do some shows in Canada and on the West Coast, maybe Florida when it starts getting colder in NJ.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Thought Ration, lp

Rainforest, 8855 Slo Holly Ln, #110, Wilsonville OR 97070

Affirmative Action, from upstate New York, play the type of raw but melodic punk hardcore as, say, Reagan Youth, very early Government Issue, or new bands like Go and Inflatable Children. I had a feeling I was really going to dig this after reading the lyric sheet, which exhibits a good perception of what the American businessworld, media, and government are really all about. The songwriting is far from generic (well...not that far) and is done thoughtfully, resulting in intensity and consistency. Although thin on production (esp the guitars), there's something seriously provoking about their sound. And their songs really go into detail on exposing the bullshit that goes on in the American system. Hope they stick with it.

- John L.

ALL ABOUT CHAD

"Chad's Very First Record," 7"

% Ben Reiser, 246 7th Ave #9, Brooklyn NY 11215

Living with an insecure bass player must be tough, but these guys managed to put together a good single in spite of it. "Embarassing Moments" reminds me a lot of early King Missile (you know, before Dogbowl started his own stuff an miserably drudged into rock opera). Something tells me this band are much more creative live and would put on a great show. Watch for them. They might assimilate into the Yo La Tengo crowd, but they'd put up a fight before they'd start doing Elvis covers.

- Leif H.

BARNEY RUBBLE & THE CUNT STUBBLE

Soap Sud Enema, CD

Mutha, PO Box 416, W Long Branch NJ 07764

Imagine if 2 Live Crew were white and even stupider and crasser. Better yet, don't bother.

- Jim T.

BOUNCING SOULS

"Ugly Bill" 7-inch EP

Complex, 131 N. 6th Ave, Highland Pk NJ 08904

Seeing this band live was a pretty fun experience, if only because everyone in the club seemed to really be into the white-boy funk and hardcore thing that the band was spewing, jumping up and down enthusiastically in a way that coincided existentially with the band's karma-laden moniker. On vinyl, they don't seem as fast or energetic, with mostly strum bass replacing the snap-pop funkiness, but with lots of wah-wah and other funky effects on the guitar to make good crossover stuff with mostly rapped, occasionally sung, vocals. And I'm sure their Chili Pepper coiffed selves make for some really fine backstage lays for some lucky swooning groupie.

- Matt S.

MARSHALL CRENSHAW

Life's Too Short, CD

MCA

Marshall Crenshaw has been playing his own brand of popabilly for the last decade, and while you can say that he hasn't grown artistically much, it's also true that he's consistently made extremely enjoyable records the whole time. Although there's nothing new on this one that equals the pop brilliance of some of his earlier efforts, a couple of tracks (like the upbeat "Better Back Off" and the bouncy "Walkin' Around") come really close. My only complaint is the length of the songs; nearly all of them go on too long. Other than that, this is a fine collection from an underrated performer who's never really gotten his due.

- The Platterpuss



GUMBALL

Special Kiss, CD

Primo Scree/Caroline

Primo Scree threatens to outperform its parent label, Caroline -- like Amphetamine Reptile has done to Twintone -- if they keep releasing killer stuff like this new Velvet Monkeys album. Don Fleming's groovy, groovy vocals and droning guitar have never sounded fruitier, the lyrics remain a brilliant pastiche of the 6T's psychedelic era, and Jay Spiegel's drumming continues to propel it all along like a hit of meth mixed in with your psilocybin mushrooms. Now my only question is, why does it say Gumball on the cover?

- Jim T.

HONEYMOON KILLERS

"Kansas City Madman"/"Nothin'" 7 inch

Inspid, PO Box E155, St James NSW, Australia

The Honeymoon Killers have been at this for years, producing violent, distuneful, feedback-drenched punk. They've never tried to be hip to the noise scene, just play their own style of NYC trash rock. This 7 inch is slightly more listenable than their prior releases (including abominable singles on Sub-Pop and Sympathy). "K.C. Madman" is trash punk in its most raw form, while "Nothin'" catches a really twisted groove. Thumbs up.

- John L.

IRON PROSTATE

Loud, Fast, And Aging Rapidly, LP

Screamin' Skull/Skyclad

If you're ever in CBGB at around 2 a.m. and you see a bunch of fortyish balding, belching Jewish guys wandering around aimlessly, don't run for the bouncer thinking they're bums who wandered in from the Palace Hotel next door. It's probably just Iron Prostate, the band that proves the maxim, "old punks never die...and they never go away either." With former members of Ed Gein's Car, False Prophets, Letch Patrol, and the Jupiter Jets, these guys have logged more miles than Bob Hope's luggage, and they've forgotten more about how to be loud, fast and funny than most young bands today are ever gonna learn. If you're old enough to remember the Dictators and wish bands still made records like that, guess what? This one still does.

- Jim T.

IRONWORKS**"Prizer" EP**

American Frequency, Box 100270, Brooklyn NY 11210

Not the best production, kind of flat songs, but something tells me that these guys are probably better live. There's one hard song on this that sounds great, but don't ask me which one it is because I was confused by the packaging. This one song totally makes up for the cheesey Mexican movie theme on the other side. The bonus flexi inside is also good, very experimental noise/guitar effects type mindbending things. Potentially a good recorded band, just get a better producer.

- Jodi S.

LOUDSPEAKER**"King"/"Lucky 13" 7-inch**

Luncast, PO Box 2479, New York NY 10009

Loud, abrasive death-dirge in the vein of Killdozer, mid-period Swans, and maybe Vertigo. One side is a painful, abrupt barrage of noise, the other is an industrial instrumental. Both are probably too long and wind up testing your endurance, but the production is excellent and will give your speakers a real work out. If Helmet, Unsane, and Big Black are your thing, then this is for you.

- John L.

**LUCY BROWN**

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

LOVE CHILD**Okay?, lp**

Homestead

Love Child throw out some simple, corny tunes with some nice harmonies, and occasionally break into a quick and harmless noise thing. Sure to make waves at Maxwells.

- Tom A.

LUCY BROWN**Lucy Brown, lp**

Megaforce

This is the band I've heard much hype about over the past year. Finally got signed after kickin' ass in many a live performance. This, their first album, is a good debut by this young, local band (Jersey by way of suburban D.C.) of modern-day funk rockers, but it doesn't quite live up to the plethora of superlatives heaped on the boys. A great deal of their power and energy has been lost on the trip from live to Memorex. Nonetheless, Lucy Brown does still manage to reveal some of what it is that made them a club favorite: socially conscious lyrics powerfully sung over a steady rock slam with a funky groove. If you like your rock straight up with a funk edge, you should enjoy what Lucy Brown has to offer.

- Alan B.

PAVEMENT**Perfect Sound Forever, 10" EP**

Drag City

Pavement's sound is so far from the perfect hi-fi, but who cares about fidelity when/the songs are this good, this twisted, this indescribable? Comparisons don't do these guys justice, they just absorb everything and disassemble it and force it back together like a warped jigsaw puzzle. To call it art-rock would insult it, to call it noise would dismiss it. It's just skewed pop that leans toward the odd end of the spectrum.

- Jodi S.

RAILROAD JERK**"Younger Than You"/"Ballad of Jim White" 7 inch**

Matador

RRJ are one of my fave bands, just because they're so different. Bluesy, twisted rock and roll. Their lp sort of got overshadowed by its tandem release, Teenage Fan Club, but those of us who fell in love with that record won't be disappointed. "Younger" is one of the best songs this band's done, with its doubletime drumbeats, Chris Mueller's scratchy guitar, the lo-fi vocals and an unbridled energy that, when given the live treatment, whips the crowd into a frenzy. I've seen it, man. "Jim White" is a slower, Delta Blues-y croon that the band claims to be based on guys they went to school with.

Jodi S.

SLEEPER - 7" EP

Tragic Life, PO Box 060623, Staten Is, NY 10306

Pop punk in the Green Day vein. Well worth the three bucks.

- Jerod H.

THROTTLE**"New Freaks On The Block" EP**

Heat Blast, PO Box 491, Eatontown NJ 07724

Featuring ex-members of the theatrical supergroups GWAR and Serial Killers, Throttle mix in some heavy mid-tempo pounding and a good dose of post-hardcore metal. The best parts are the rhythm section and unique vocals. (Since the release of this single, vocalist Big Joe has switched to second guitar -- singing interfered with his smoking.)

- Tom A.

VOICE IN TIME

Dangerous Town, CD

Zero Hour, PO Box 1434, Summit NJ 07902

Inspid AOR-wannabe shlock which should find a rabid audience among all the brain-dead yuppies out there who desperately miss Kansas and Toto. The kind of shit that gives do-it-yourself vanity productions a bad name, and the sort of thing I'd usually just ignore -- except their goddamn publicist called me four times to ask if I was going to review it. Well, I did. Happy now?

- Jim T.

BLACK ROCK COALITION

History Of Our Future, CD

Rykodisc

These ten BRC bands are on a quest to rid the music biz of the idiotic notion that music is an art form to be created along color lines. By presenting the jazzy blues of Michael Hills Bluesland alongside the socio-political poetry of DeDahDooDahDa next to the straightahead metal of Shock Council, the BRC has served up a tasty gumbo that attempts to showcase the diversity of Black music and Black musicians and smash the stereotypes and double standards that now permeate the music scene. Quite a lofty goal. While they do manage to get the message across fairly well, my one gripe is that much of the music on this compilation tends to come off a bit too mainstream /commercial, as if nothing's been learned from the down and dirty raw experimentation of hip hop, or from other Black bands like the Bad Brains or D-Xtreme. This comp is a good start for the six-year old BRC, but perhaps next time they'll wave their freak flag a little more proudly.

- Alan B.

BROOKLYN BEAT

Live At CBGB's - Soon To Be A Major Motion Picture, CD
Comm 3

One of those compilations that takes a few plays until it grows on you. Early on, we have Bite The Wax Godhead, doing a self-titled rap beat thing that I liked a lot more than their demo. The Squirrels From Hell lament a "lifestyle that's taken its toll" on the Vista Hotel, and the Fields make the career progressive comment, "We play for fuckin' beer." The Moe contribute "What's The Matter With David;" I don't know the answer but the song was torture on me. I'd say the best cut was Al Lee Wyer's "Can't We Just Talk," a lament about a job that sucks and people who do everything but listen. A good comp overall showing mostly talent, with just a few bands that should've been sentenced to spending the rest of their lives playing Sunday night auditions at CBGBs. (The "Brooklyn Beat" group of bands is a very loose cooperative who all frequently play Lauterbach's in Brooklyn).

- Tom B.

NEW YORK EYE AND EAR CONTROL

Matador

Except for pleasant but unessential tracks by Sonic Youth soundalikes The Dustdevils, folkie Steve Fitch, the Hoboken pop holdovers in Timber, and Railroad Jerk, most of this compilation CD is given over to the sort of obnoxious, free form noise-rock that drives me up a wall. If there are people out there who really like to sit at home and listen to this kind of screech, god help what's left of their nervous systems.

- Jim T.

But Here's A Brief List Of Topics Covered On Mr. Bungle's Debut:

**Sex With Footwear • Pus Draining • Oral Sex
With Cultural Icons • Viscous Secretions**

And Other Bodily Fluids •

Bondage Fantasies •

Phone Sex • Body Parts

And How They Fit

Together • PG-Rated

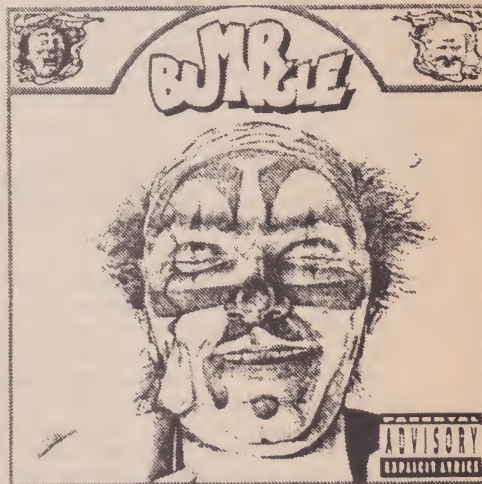
Movie Stars • X-Rated

Movie Stars • The

Alimentary Canal •

Beethoven • Oedipus • Vegetables •

Meat *And after all, isn't that what life's all about?*



Mr. Bungle. Produced by John Zorn & Mr. Bungle.



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CYCLE SLUTS FROM HELL -- SELF-TITLED -- EPIC RECORDS

It wasn't all that long ago that New York's grungiest, most repulsive band, Cycle Sluts From Hell, were just another unsigned band playing three-chord power riffs in some of the City's sleazier nightclubs. How this, this thing ever got signed to a major label is beyond any reasonable comprehension. They don't play instruments, they can't carry a note, and they write the lamest tunes around. But suburban, white teenage boys who dig NWA 'cause that's what Axl says will probably also dig the Sluts. Fine with me; Axl worship was never my deal anyway.

McQUEEN STREET -- McQUEEN STREET -- SBK RECORDS

For some still unknown reason, SBK Records sent me a one-song sampler tape of McQueen Street's upcoming debut album. Not much to form an opinion with, but a decent way to whet the appetite, I guess. The tune is called "My Religion", and deals with what I assume is people trying to clamp down on others' beliefs. It's a cool track, a bit reminiscent of Bang Tango in the vocals layered over basic distort-a-guitar riff rock. Tom (Poison, Motley, L.A. Guns) Werman produced, so I guess we're looking at the next big thing.

ENUFF Z' NUFF -- STRENGTH -- ATCO RECORDS --

Regardless of the goofy, glamboy, retro-hippie image, the guys in Enuff Z' Nuff are actually fine musicians. Granted, guitarist Derek Frigo's hairsprayed head can still match a watermelon inch for inch, but he's also developed amazingly impressive chops since 1989's self-titled debut. Vikki Foxx is a hair farmer from the word go, nevertheless, he's matured into a rare hard rock commodity -- a drummer who eschews the big boom-boom sound and, therefore, a Tama endorsement, to instead play a simple, steady beat.

But technical improvement hasn't taken Enuff Z' Nuff any further musically; most of Strength relies on the band indulgently usurping from their influences -- most notably, of course, The Beatles. "The Way Home" is eerily McCartney-esque; singer Donnie Vie's dreamy, sedative voice gently caressing each note of the piano as angelic strings swell under the mix. "Goodbye" is no different except that Frigo's dad, famed classical violinist Johnny Frigo, cameos on the violin and viola. What Strength ultimately lacks, however, is flat-out rockers. Not until the eighth cut, "Long Way to Go," do we hear the true power-pop potential of Enuff Z' Nuff. It's worth a listen, if for nothing else than Frigo's explosive solo.

Mostly, however, Strength is one overdrawn yearning of syrupy teenage love, a Gap-wearing tryst to ill the collective stomach. Yet, within each song is redemption: Listen to the three and four part vocal harmonies in the chorus of "Holly Wood Ya," or the stair-step bridge of "In Crowd" and the gripping melody of "Mother's Eyes" -- all fine showcasings of E'ZN's talents. It's when the band goes politically correct with their calling for racial equality on "Mother's Eyes" that a barf bag is no longer recommended; it's required. "Why is one man not just like another man/Nothing can change/Till we rearrange/All of life's important fingers on one hand." "The World Is A Gutter" is even sillier. The lyrics reek of such mock hippie-isms that it's a wonder ex-flowerchildren have stalked and pukka-beaded the band to a bloody death. But just as their image is for the eyes, Enuff Z' Nuff's music is for the ears; the brain can sit this one out, you shouldn't.



by Craig Donner

ANDREW DICE CLAY -- DICE RULES -- DEF AMERICAN

The problem here isn't quite as puzzling as it would seem; Dice is fuckin' funny. There's no two ways about it. If you don't get the joke of a guy strapping on a leather jacket dripping with costume jewelry and telling dirty Mother Goose rhymes, you just don't have a sense of fucking humor.

See, the real problem is that Dice was considered hilarious when merely a cult figure among college kids. But said college kids now find Dice repelling because he sells-out Madison Square Garden, a mustn't for pretentious moccasin-wearin' college boys and girls. I hear it all the time and the shit just doesn't cut it. As for those others, y'know, the tight-ass, right-wing, conservative reactionaries -- what really need be said.

Because on Dice Rules, Clay is funnier, nastier, and more vulgar than ever. In fact, this record doesn't begin to translate the electricity buzzing through the Garden during its taping (Side 2 was recorded at a gig at Caroline's Comedy Club); I was at the Garden, and I laughed for forty-fuckin-five straight minutes. His "Hoidy Toidy Chicks" skit -- I'm paraphrasing, but anyway, You're in a club and you ask this girl to dance and she says "No, I don't dance" so you say "Okay, honey, why don't you just blow me in the bathroom so I can get out of here. My wife doesn't even know I'm gone." -- is hilarious. "The Car Ride (Goin' To a Party)" will have you on the floor, as will "Filthy in Bed" and "Industrial Size." The only clunkers are "Birds" and "Debbie Duz Everything," which is the worst kind of filler possible -- unfunny and stupid.

But, anyway, this tape is fuckin' incredible. Buy it. Play it. Blast it at your neighbor's house just to annoy them. I mean, can you resist a skit like "Double Parking -- again a paraphrase -- I was once dating this chick who was such a whore that I had to double park my dick on her ass for an hour just to get in. Ohhhhhhhhh."

PRIMUS -- SAILING THE SEAS OF CHEESE -
ATLANTIC

Whatever it is in the San Francisco water system that turns ordinary metal bands into mind-blowing mutations of musical majesty, I want some now.

Primus are only the latest of San Fran's stockpile to go the route of major labeldom (following-up two awesome indie releases on Caroline Records, Suck on This and Frizzle Fry), and if one Bay Area band deserves the recognition, it's these guys. See, it's not quite funk that they do. Nor is it metal. It's "psychedelic polka," or, at least, so says unbalanced bass basher and lead singer Les Claypool, the only known human caricature of a cartoon. He, along with guitarist Larry LaLonde and drummer Tim Alexander, immerse themselves in musical styles so blatantly conflicting that it's a wonder their albums are listenable, let alone masterpieces. There are tinges of rap and metal and funk -- lots of funk -- jazz, and thrash all mingling during the same song and usually at the same instance. Claypool sings like a drunken Elmer Fudd, warbling out words and phrases like a scatter on amphetamines.

He slaps and strums his bass to create the effect of a rhythm guitar gone haywire; just check out the delirious "Jerry Was a Race Car Driver", where Claypool fingertips throughout the entire song. Guitarist LaLonde adds a metallic crunch to the outfit, and drummer Alexander just bashes up a storm. (Faith No More's Mike Bordin lends his sticks to the LP on the wonderful "Here Come The Bastards."

But I gush. So, basically, you know the deal: Primus sucks. There's nothing else to it. Primus sucks sucks sucks.

WARRIOR SOUL -- drugs, god and the new republic --
DGC

Warrior Soul's latest effort, the magnificently titled drugs, god and the new republic, serves merely as an extension of last year's overlooked debut, Last Decade, Dead Century. Once again, the plights of governmental corruption and social decay are set amid a blaze of distorted guitar and desperate vocals. Lead singer Kory Clarke, now harvesting the best hair in rock n' roll, conjures up grim, doleful images with poetic-style lyrics, at times unnervingly realistic, and at other times, bloated in artsy metaphors. "The Answer" illustrates the latter: "plastic leaders seem like insects/tortured cities lost beyond/pleasure films of landscapes/dirt on royal gown." He strikes a painful blow in "The Wasteland," where the naivete seen in the first verse turns to wide-eyed realization: "I rocked to Manhattan and what'd I see/Some great big buildings that could set me free." "Pay your money to the landlord/Donald Trump is just a money whore/Under my bed there's a baseball bat/the goddamn taxes gonna break my back."

Clarke's voice falls prey to Perry Farrellism's throughout much of drugs, god..., especially on "My Time" and "Man Must Live As One," where a case could be made that Farrell is the stronger of the two vocalists. It's an interesting point because Clarke's voice was left virtually untouched on Last Decade. Guitarist John Ricco creates some of the most obnoxious riffs around, all buzzing and distorted, and each sounding uniquely derivative of one another. Drummer Mark Evans and bassist Pete McClanahan prove formidable throughout, although their combined attempt at funk on "Real Thing" is poor. drugs, god and the new republic isn't so much a step forward for Warrior Soul as it's no step at all.



TYPE O NEGATIVE

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

LAST REMAINS -- SELF-TITLED DEMO

89 Ashwood Ave., Summit, NJ 07901

Summit, NJ's Last Remains haven't quite drawn the line between influence and imitation. "One Remains" blushes with Geoff Tate-inspired vocals, a meeting of high-pitches wails and deep, resonating tones. The same goes for "Quest For Laberneth", where shadings of Savatage rule the roost. Drummer Adam Kieffer plays some intricate, but ultimately distracting beats; too often his presence is unnecessarily thrust into the mix, like his start-and-stop hammerings on "One Remains". The cowbell on "Quest" is beyond baffling. What's that doing in there, anyway? A good tape? Yes. Can it be better? Definitely.

XENTRIX -- DILUTE TO TASTE -- ROADRACER

Didn't know the Brits had it in 'em, did ya? Thought they only sipped tea and gushed over the Royal Family, huh? Xentrix are here to prove all that wrong, to spit in the face of the King and Queen and to piss in every saucer they find.

Dilute to Taste does the Limeys good. Recorded live at Preston Polytechnic, wherever and whatever that may be, this six song splattering of bile and pus incorporates the essentials of thrash with a melodic underpinning that bridges the gap between true, early 80's heavy metal and grimacing Metalli-blasts of muscle. "Pure Thought" converges a wrecking-ball beat with a Strat-ified guitar tone that claws at your face, shredding skin like it was cheese. The menacing rumbles of "Balance of Power" are equilibrium shattering, with excruciating blasts of plutonium punch snapping unsuspecting necks like brittle chicken bones. "Crimes" serves notice to the tamest of listeners with mosh breaks that could permanently maim and disfigure.

Vocalist Chris Astley is no more a heavy metal screamer than he is a thrash grinder; he's Rob Halford sucking down vocal steroids -- as coarse and jarring as shattered glass, but with a sense of melody. The finishing track is a cover of Ray Parker Jr.'s "Ghostbusters," a cheap gimmick the band purveyed on their last record of that same name. It seemed to get the fans' rocks off here, so who's to complain. It's rare the Brits get as down and dirty as us Americans.

58K -- SELF TITLED DEMO

(58 Kensington Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07304)

Who says Jersey bands have a fixation with Garden State homeboy Jon Bon Jovi? 58K, out of Jersey City, is doing an impressive job playing basic rock n' roll, minus any pretensions and jammed with social awareness. The six-member outfit's demo, a collection of five tunes taped at Hoboken's Waterfront Studios, sprouts cornstalks at some points, overbearingly so on the opening cut, "America the Beautiful," which is yet another look at the chronically awful state of our culture. Lead singer John Gleeson sounds like Meatloaf here; elsewhere, his melodic voice is powerful and a highlight of the demo. The tape's best cut, ironically, is its last, "Ray of Hope," with guitarist John Pennello's violin accompaniment and Gleeson and part-time vocalist Maria Parisi's duet. No vocal harmonies are attempted on this track, thankfully, seeing as how poorly executed they were on the opening verse of "My Time". Overall, though, an enjoyable tape and as catchy as I've heard from a Jersey band in a while.

KINGDOM COME -- HANDS OF TIME -- POLYDOR

Oh nol Tell me it's just a hallucination...a bad dream. Please. Say it ain't so. No. I can't...No..Lenny Wolf...Led Zepp...I think I hear Robert Plant. Aaaaarrggghhh.

I, NAPOLEAN -- SELF-TITLED -- GEFEN RECORDS

Because hard rock bands often are accused of paying greater attention to their bottle of mouse than to their respective instruments, it's unfortunate that I, Napolean will likely be cast as just another Sunset Strip metal band. The fact is I, Napolean bear more of a musical resemblance to 70s superstars Queen and Cheap Trick -- both comprised of exceedingly ugly men -- than to any of their pretty boy peers.

Shadings of Queen are vivid mostly in lead singer and band namesake Steve Napolean's arrangements and excessive use of the piano. His scratchy voice, the result of operatic training as a kid, roughens the songs, an essential element to those unfortunate ones drowned in thick keyboards. His operatic training really bleeds through in his arrangements; the constant time changes and style swaps give I, Napolean a progressive feel, in total contrast to the hair-band look.

Napolean, the man, penned the entire LP, and his style is apparent if not obvious after 12 songs. Lyrically, Napolean's an interesting dude, even a bit warped, but his writing usually brushes only the surface of his topic, rarely exploring it in-depth. The lyrics drip with artsy pretension so often that, unfortunately, after a while, you tend to disregard them.

Napolean co-produced the record with Godfrey Diamond, and the resulting effort is clean, often glossy and grand, but not cheesy, as in, say, Nelson. Thick layerings of keyboards float out of the mix without compromising the band's overall ballsy ruggedness. If talent rightfully wins out over image, then I, Napolean have themselves a hit. If not, count them in with the scores of MIA mislabeled bands.

ANTHRAX -- ATTACK OF THE KILLER B's -- MEGAFORCE

Before Anthrax worshipers blow a bone, Attack of the Killer B's is not a new Anthrax album. It is a 12-song EP of remakes and covers recorded over the past few years; basically, product to keep fans satisfied and to sustain interest in the band's Clash of the Titan's arena jaunt.

Attack of the Killer B's, however, is a rarity in these days of image control; few bands would release such a series of unpolished oddities and outtakes. The blissful noise work on the ex-S.O.D. tune "Milk (Ode to Billy)" and Discharge's "Protest and Survive" is fun bordering on illegal. The cover of Kiss' "Parasite" is an improvement of the original. The live version of "Keep It In the Family," clocking in at 7:19, is just too damn long; in comparison, "Chromatic Death" packs more wallop in 1:28 than an incoming Scud. The anti-censorship "Startin' Up A Posse" reeks of Scatterbrain gimmickry; but hearing Scott Ian struggling to sing "You fuckin' whores" over a country-tinged riff with the band backing him up sounding like the goddamn Rockettes (if they sang) is the fuckin' cake. The remake of "I'm the Man" isn't as loose as the original, but new lyrics and a near-industrial beat keeps it jammin'.

Anthrax and Public Enemy's collaboration on "Bring the Noise" (an old PE tune) is God like; Chuck D kicks on the first two verses, and Ian holds his own the "rest of the way. It's the ultimate rap/metal hybrid, the mold from which all others will be judged. But as with most PE's tunes, Chuck D's glorification and, seemingly, justification of Lewis Farrakhan and his warped, racist views clouds the larger accomplishment of this tune -- the joining of rap and metal music and fans in a non-violent, non-threatening environment. It's the only black spot on an otherwise delightful record. By the way, Scott Ian sings on an inexplicable number of tracks. I haven't quite figured out why, yet.

BATON ROUGE -- LIGHTS OUT IN THE PLAYGROUND -- (EAST WEST RECORDS)

On their debut album, Baton Rouge sang this silly, keyboard-crazed song called "Walk Like A Woman." While it was sheer cheese, drippy, smelly, stinky Kraft cheese, its laid-back personality and catchy chorus made the cheese excusable, even edible. That's why their follow-up album, Lights Out in the Playground, is so perplexing. The light-heartedness of their debut is all but gone. The keyboards have been relegated to the very bottom of the mix, and the guitars thrust to the front. This normally isn't problematic except most of the riffs here have very little character; without strong keyboard accompaniment, the tunes lose all their identity.

While the funky groove of "Full Time Body" and the straight rock of "Tie You Down" are on line with most commercial metal groups, they truly lack any memorable traits. The big, bluesy ballad "Tokyo Time" is a good song, also, except I forget what it sounded like just as quickly as it ended. Nothing on Lights Out in the Playground is memorable, other than how unmemorable the whole thing is.

KIK TRACEE -- NO RULES -- RCA RECORDS

Three things nearly prevented me from approaching Kik Tracee's debut album, No Rules, as an impartial bystander. One, that goofy, heavy metal title; two, Dana Strum of Slaughter produced; and three, a message on the back of the CD booklet reads "Note: For best results, this recording should be played at maximum volume while standing in front of Merry Go Round in the mall, chewing gum, twirling your hair, and rating the butts of all cute +guys who walk by. (Ok, wait, I made up that last part. But the maximum volume thing is really there.) I'm only sorry now I had such a strong apprehension to hearing the record; it's a great disc, full of hairy-chested, heavy metal guitars and wispy, powerful vocals.

The title track is the most commercial on the album, with its Poison guitar lick and "I don't care if you don't like my hair" lyric. (I ain't kidding 'bout that line.) "Soul Shaker" has a thumping, heavy-duty groove and "Trash City" is prime headbanging elegance. The love-torn ballad "You're So Strange" is lively but mellow and features an outstanding acoustic guitar sound -- which unfortunately leads into praise for Strum. Honestly, he did a damn good job, supplying a clean production with a huge, sweeping sound. He refrained from altering Kik Tracee's left-of-center song stylings to fit the Slaughter mold; in other words, corporate metal up the wazoo. At times, the drums stink of Slaughtermisms, but overall, Kik Tracee's style remains mostly their own. Even the various vocal phrasings of frontman Stephen Shareaux come across intact, coloring each track with its own, unique sound and flavor. Shareaux stretches for Axl's "Mr. Brownstone" squeaky wail often without tipping the skinned-alive cat level; he matches the big man to perfection on "Velvet Crush" and "Rattlesnake Eyes".



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THE BLANKS - "It's Punk Rock"

% The Blanks, 1303 Myrtle St, Hillside NJ 07205

By the time you read this, the Blanks will probably have changed their name, since some other band called the Blanks is threatening them with a lawsuit. But this is "The Blanks" you've mostly likely seen listed playing somewhere in the Greater NY area, since they're constantly gigging. This 7-song demo contains some simple, fun punk, Notty overtones in the vocals and cool, catchy changes thrown into songs like "Jehovah's Witness." And it's always good to see female participation in bands (here, the guitarist). A pretty good first effort all the way around, from the songs to the packaging. - Tom A.

BRUCE WAYNE - Demo

%Wayne Garcia, 31 Emerson Rd, No Brunswick NJ 08902

When Bruce Wingate and Wayne Garcia decided to leave Adrenalin O.D., they hooked up with Joel Weinberger (who had played with Garcia in Littlehood) and formed Bruce Wayne. (At least nobody has to ask them what their name means.) Musically, this sounds very much like that the next A.O.D. lp might have been like post-"Ishtar," minus the big catchy hooks -- power-chord rock with the speed and energy of hardcore but more melody and diversity than hc's one-dimensional thrashy buzz. Wingate's guitar still packs a wallop and the rhythm section pummels the beat with power & precision. The big change from A.O.D. is in the lyrics; where almost every A.O.D. song was goofy, Bruce Wayne's lyrics deal with broken hearts, unrequited love, the monotony of life...serious and downbeat topics, although delivered live the band roars through them with enough energy and high spirits to make you forget they're singing about how wretched they are. - Jim T.

DEARDARKHEAD - "Spiral Down And Vibrate" 4 song demo -
PO Box 87, Somers Pt, NJ 08244

A sort of gothic, drone quartet from South Jersey who sound an awful lot like Depeche Mode to me. Not dance music but dancey, produced with a dense, almost foggy sound that blends everything together. - Jim T.

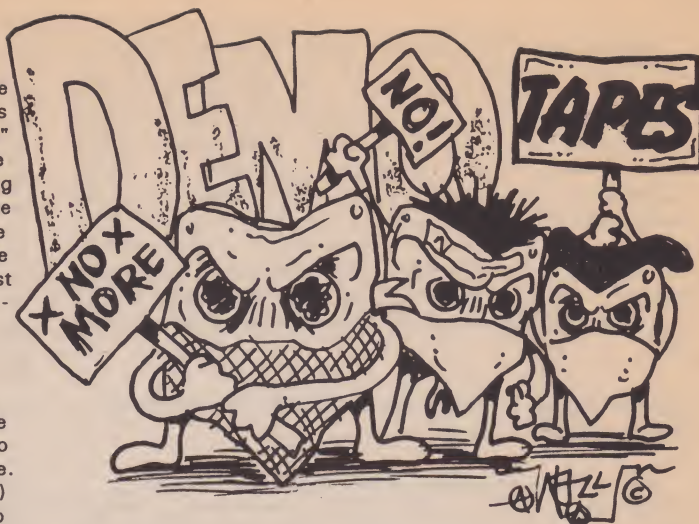
DELEVANTES - "The Delevantes" 10-song cassette
PO Box M1508, Hoboken NJ 07030

After years of slugging it out on the local club scene without a record deal, Hoboken's Who's Your Daddy decided (wisely, I think) to try changing their name and giving it another shot. The result is The Delevantes, fronted by brothers Bob and Mike Delevante. And rather than wait around for a label deal, the band has released their own album-length cassette, which provides a strong showcase for their country-eastern sound. I'd always thought of Who's Your Daddy as a honky-tonkin', frat party sort of band, so it's a little surprising to hear how somber and downbeat these new songs are. With a husky voice as gravelly as Johnny Cash, the band sings songs of longing and heartbreak; "Everybody Wants What They Can't Have," "Love Leaves Your Heart," "I Wish I Were A Cowboy." Hank Williams by way of The Band and Gordon Lightfoot might be the best way to describe these rich, evocative songs, not unlike Springsteen's "Nebraska" lp played by a full band. With countryish balladeers like John Wesley Harding signed to the majors, maybe these guys' time has finally come. - Jim T.

ENORMOUS RICHARD - "30 Skuntry Hits"

%Chris King, 2115 Marconi, St Louis MO 63110

Enormous Richard sounds like a low-budget Too Much Joy, with the same wide-eyed, fun-loving gusto on every cut, usually put to somewhat goofy lyrics. This tape is more like a double album than a demo, with 30 songs (and that's probably 15 too many). But you have to admire anyone who can write a whole song around an idea as simple as "I Feel Crummy" or "Dogs With Their Heads Out The Window;" and when the band gets topical - like on "We're Not REM," or "Hanging Out With Jesus" - their sarcastic wit will get you to laugh out loud. Probably lots of fun live (their press clippings would have you believe they are REM). - Jim T.



FALLING STAIRS - Demo

PO Box 4186, Bayside NY 11360

This band recently got back together after a short hiatus (i.e. they broke up and thought better of it) and this 3-song demo suggests they did the right thing. While Falling Stairs used to sound way too much like R.E.M. for their own good, these new tunes go a long way toward establishing their own sound - a little heavier, still riffy and upbeat, with the same folk/rock roots as the Athens boys but a lot more direct, and with lyrics that are not only intelligible but meaningful. The 'Stairs still work in those cool 3-D background harmonies, one lesson they learned from R.E.M. that I'm glad they didn't forget. - Jim T.

FUNNY UNCLES - Demo

% Rick Bruccoleri, 136 Tulip Ave #2, Floral Park NY 11001

This demo is so poorly recorded that I couldn't understand too many of the lyrics. It seems the band is relying heavily on people understanding their apparently funny, funny, knee-slapping humor. Well, here's a word of advice: Either (a) include a lyric sheet (b) record at a real studio, or at least mix your recordings better, or (c) stay in your garage until you no longer want to be the next Dead Milkmen.

The musically actually isn't that bad, at least what little of it I could distinguish through the mud. 60's surfy music with gitty-up, power-pop punk and some good guitar strumming. But after trying to decipher this mess, I have a chip on my shoulder and a headache. Arrgggh! - Frank P.

JUICE - 16 song demo

% Josh Bolton (301) 788 7226

The Elvis From Hell vocals of Juice's lead singer Kurt suggest both Glenn Danzig and Jim Morrison; I can't say I like his voice, but it's certainly impossible to ignore. The Danzig/Doors comparisons continue by virtue of the band's traditional blues-based rock'n'roll chords, spiced up by strong riffs from guitarist Kevin. If the band has as much presence on stage and they project on this demo, we're going to be hearing from this Baltimore-based quartet soon. - Jim T.

JERRY KITZROW & WILD HONEY - 2 song demo

PO Box 20806, New York NY 10009

Jerry Kitzrow's one of the most talented singer/songwriters in New York, but he's had nothing but bad luck with bands. His first group, The Bandables, formed back in high school, broke up just when they were on the verge of getting somewhere. Kitzrow disappeared for five years and then, miraculously, the entire Bandables lineup reunited for a short time. But that fizzled too, and now Jerry's pretty much going it alone. You'd think some label would pick him up just to get their hands on the publishing. Here, "Levitaton" is pure Kitzrow power-pop at its shimmery best, reminiscent of Let's

Active at their perkier. The B side showcases Kitzrow's guitar skills, adding a layer of harmonic dissonance over a beautiful 12-string acoustic ballad, and throwing in a bouncy chorus as a bonus. - Jim T.

NOISE CULTURE demo

% Don Jannazzo, 67-46 80 St, Middle Village NY 11379

I haven't seen this band live yet, and you might want to take this with a grain of salt as the lead singer writes for this fanzine, but anyway, this demo's gonna turn some heads and shake some serious butt. Undeniable Living Colour influences aside, the band's fusion of hardcore and funk hits on all cylinders -- tight, hard, funky, and flavorful, with discreet metal solos and hi-energy vocals from Alan Baez (he's the JB writer, ok?). The lyrics focus on specific social issues without playing race games or pandering to the homeboys, zeroing in on police violence, the hopelessness of the prison system, finally ending in a call to begin the soul revolution by looking within ourselves. Hot, hard, and smart, what more could you want? - Jim T.

PEGLEGASUS

% Mark Kamburis, 2524 McKinney St, Houston TX 77003

The Peg Leg Voscamp brothers and their bass-playin' pal formed this mind-boggling, eclectic Brady Bunch-lovin' band while eatin' barbeque in the backyard in Houston, Texas. Frontman, singer, songwriter, guitarist and lead screaming geek John Voscamp is, in my opinion, going to be a big star. I had the honor of witnessing Peglegasus showcase at the SXSW Conference in Austin. To say they brought the house down would be an understatement.

The demo on the other hand has a few small problems. This is their first effort, a six-song live cassette. The songs mildly suffer from mediocre recording quality and lack the exciting visuals of their live show. Musically...umm, well, um, ah, ok, imagine this -- stick in Minutemen chop-chop with a Talking Heads '77 vocal delivery, throw in a touch of the Partridge Family and some out-of-tune Sonic Youth, and you'll begin to get the picture. This band will one day rule the earth. Write for this demo immediately. I have spoken. - Frank P.

SACRED DEATH - "Deadly Playground"

PO Box 21, Syracuse NY 13208

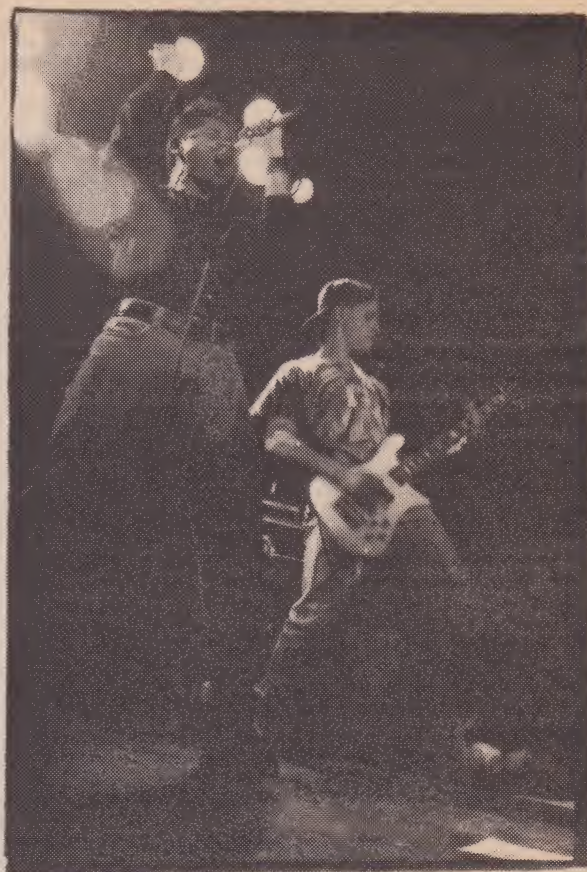
This demo is not at all what I expected. Lyrically, death, blood, and self-independence are the overshadowing themes. But don't get me wrong - Sacred Death are anything but a death metal band. Actually, they are five great musicians cranking out excellent, well-executed, powerful and eclectic metal. I hear influences from Thin Lizzy, Metallica, Iron Maiden and maybe even Savatage.

Vocalist Jeff Lawning has more than enough throat to carry even the generic thrashers on this 10-song tape. My hat's off to Bob Francis Acquaviva for dynamic production. This is a band to watch for if metal is your thing. Heavy, very heavy. - Frank P.

SCOOBY GROOVE - 5 song demo

% Dan Fadel, 4 Dale Rd, Morris Plains NJ 07950

Most funk bands just write riffs, but Scooby Groove writes songs, which is why I like them so much. That, and the fact that they're just out of high school, full of fresh-faced enthusiasm and tons of energy. Nothing on their new demo is quite as tasty as "Three Days Greasey" from their way cool first demo, but "Caveman," with its heavy stomping beat, and "Everybody," with its message about human harmony (a more original take on the generic hardcore theme of "unity"), come mighty close. Watch for these guys at a club, they're a load of fun live too. - Jim T.



NOISE CULTURE

PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ

THROTTLE BODY - "AIDS & Language" 5 song cassette

12062 10th Ave So, Seattle WA 98168

This is basically a showcase for the songwriting, guitar and vocals of Jerry Hammack, although a band is credited. The five songs here won't amaze anybody -- a little pop, a little funk, and a little rock 'n roll - and while it's all performed and put together competently enough (the cassette cover is gorgeous, the production is labelworthy), none of these songs is going to grab you by the throat and make you throw a record contract at this guy. Mellow and cleaner sounding than what's coming out of Seattle's alternative scene, which is probably why this guy is releasing his own cassettes instead of getting signed. - Jim T.

WALLMEN - "Last of The Broken Mexicans"

% Jethro Deluxe, 7711 Lisa Ln, No Syracuse NY 13212

The Wallmen are so in love with electronic effects and gadgets that I'd almost suspect one or more of them were electrical engineer majors at some upstate college who built their own effects boxes. Unfortunately all the blips, beeps and phasey filtered effects on these songs tend to obscure some decent melodies and vocals; personally, I think this would sound better played as a straight guitar band. No lyric sheet but from the titles, the songs seem fairly lightweight, with titles like "Int'l House Of JuJu," "Deep Yenta," and "Theme From Hula Week." This is an album-length cassette, 15 songs and well-produced, so it's something more than a demo but still a little too raw and half-baked to qualify as an album. - Jim T.

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

Trip No. 1 - Mr. Listener Goes To Washington
Wednesday, May 5

Mike Harbin used to play bass in a band called Admiral that I grew to like a lot. When Admiral broke up, Mike moved to Washington and invited me to visit. So I did.

It certainly turned out to be a hectic five days. I took the Amtrack out of Penn Station on Wednesday morning and got to D.C. just in time for Mike and his roommate Jim to pick me up and head out for the Maryland suburbs. Jim and Mike had a job doing sound and we had to pick up this humongous van filled with amps and speakers and shlep it all out to a little Unitarian church somewhere outside Annapolis. Without anything like a CBGB for shows, the kids in Annapolis -- from what I gathered, the guys in the band Moss Icon especially -- put on a lot of their own shows wherever they can. This was the first time in three years that this church had allowed their building to be used for a punk rock concert so everybody had their fingers crossed.

But it all went remarkably well. The bands set up, the kids came, a few people moshed up front, lots of teenage girls stood in the back and danced by themselves, and the bands totally rocked. First up were Freak Beans, another Annapolis band that I got to meet when they played ABC No Rio a while back. They've got a wild sort of funka-punka throbbing sound and their lead singer just spazzes out and goes crazy on stage, grabbing himself like he's covered with carpenter ants and then falling to the floor in a twitching, spastic heap. Way cool. Moss Icon are exactly the opposite -- a languid neo-psychdelic drone band whose songs all move like molasses. Like all drone bands, when they find a good groove you can crawl inside the noise and just wig out on it. The last band was a big surprise -- Lungfish, whose debut lp on Simple Machines/ Dischord blew a lot of minds. These dudes turned out to be older -- thirtysomething, I'd guess -- and had a heavy industrial sound, bludgeoning the ear and psyche with repeated pounding riffs, powerful as shit.

Friday, May 7

There wasn't much going on in D.C. so after a day of sightseeing, Mike and I piled into his station wagon and drove to Lancaster, PA, to the Chameleon Club. This was a special show, of sorts -- a going away party for local favorites Stand Up, who were living for a summer-long national tour, and also one of the last hardcore shows for a while at this place (some unpleasantness at a recent Bad Brains show had convinced the owner to book less troublesome acts in the future). The average age of the audience here was about 16 but things never got out of hand. Opening was Sleeper, featuring Jersey Beat's own John Lisa on guitar and John "Sex God" Telenko on vocals. Since I'm a little prejudiced, I'll let Mike Harbin review the show: "Best new band of 1991." Okay, Mike.

Stand Up were a lot better here in front of their hometown crowd than they were at ABC No Rio last summer, ultra-posi-core with an upbeat message and twin mosh guitars. Kind of a wild looking five piece too -- a baby-faced skinhead and a husky guy with a crewcut on guitar, a teen idol with Sub-Pop hair on bass, and lead singer Jeremy, a pudgy kid who makes Mr. Rogers look mean and nasty in comparison. Posi-core hasn't been this positive since Crucial Youth. But they do a fun set.

Saturday, May 8

Positive Force D.C. is well known for the shows they put on, but it's basically a social service organization, not a concert promoter. The group is loosely structured, without a lot of rules or elected leaders (a guy named Mark Andersen seems to pretty much run things although he doesn't actually have a title). Every two weeks, they get together -- anybody can come, you don't have to be a "member" since all that membership entails is showing up -- and I was astonished to see how young most of the Positive Force people are. High



by Jim Testa

school kids, mostly, and yet they do get things done -- soup kitchens, meals on wheels to the elderly, overnight aid in a free clinic, not to mention showing up and lending a hand whenever there's a political demonstration. And then there are the benefits they put on.

Besides learning about all the good work Positive Force does, I enjoyed the meeting because the one topic no one could agree on was what to do about slamdancing at shows. This is something that's been killing New York hardcore since 1981 and while I never thought it was just a local problem, it was kind of comforting to see that the mega-cool D.C. scene hasn't come up with a solution to the problem yet either. You've got your peaceniks who want a show where everyone can dance and stand up close to the stage without risking serious injury, you've got your hardline moshers who want a "hard" pit with all the slamming that they can dish out, and you've got your realists who know that no matter what you do, some numbskulls are going to show up and shove their elbows into other people's necks and faces in the name of "hardcore."

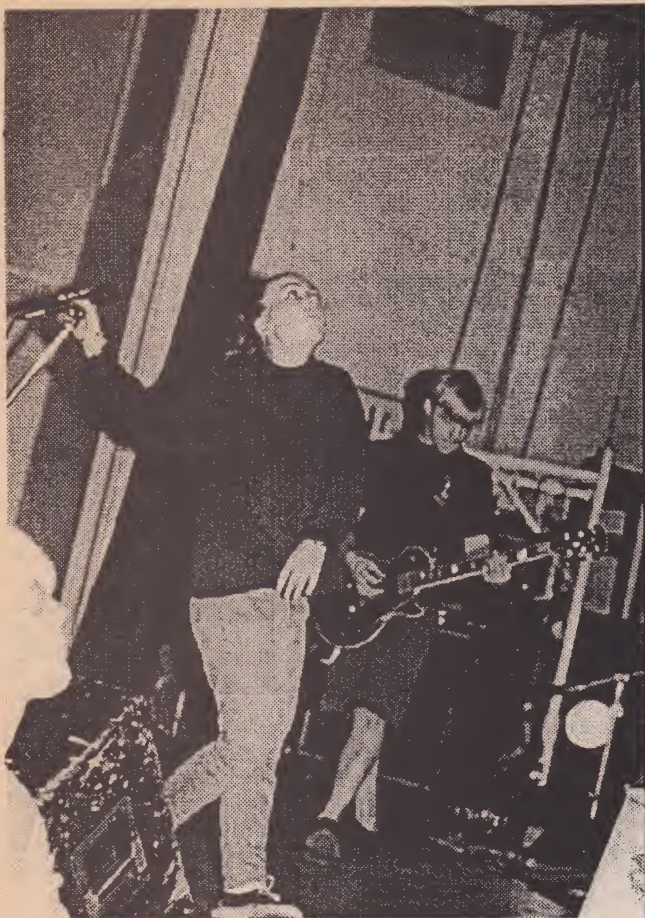
That night, Positive Force had a benefit -- the cause was technically Native American rights, although the proceeds were actually going to a center that helped Native American mothers with alcohol problems who gave birth to alcoholic babies. Mike Harbin debuted his new band, Nanda Devi, with his roommate Jim on guitar and vocals and some guy who looked like he fell off the Steppenwolf tour bus back in 1969 on drums. Let's just say it sounded better in rehearsals -- hard driving power-chord guitar, angry political lyrics, and Mike's melodic bass lines dancing above it all.

The second band proved to be the winner -- Desiderata, with Amanda MacKaye. It's probably condescending to always refer to her as Ian's sister, although given Fugazi's dominance in the punk scene nowadays, it's a hard fact to ignore. But in fact Desiderata sounds nothing like Fugazi or any other D.C. band I've heard for that matter -- the music has a fierce, funky edge and Amanda's stage presence is just brilliant. It was like discovering Patti Smith all over again. If you ever get a chance, check this band out.

Headliners Shudder To Think didn't do a very good set, and I've never liked them much anyway. Those operatic falsetto vocals and wimpy melodies just don't do it for me. Why they're one of the biggest bands in D.C. at the moment boggles the mind; why skinheads and slammers love a band whose lead singer is swishier than Richard Simmons also raises some interesting questions which we'll have to go into later.

Thursday, June 13

Shirk Circus, a high school band from Clifton, opened up, and it's a good thing they did. They brought about 50 of their



DESIDERATA

PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

friends and classmates with them and pretty much filled the place up. Not very impressive musically - they need to be tighter and work on their stage presence. They looked like they'd be a hardcore band but the music was more in the way of alternative pop. Love Battery sounded fine, but I've really had enough of the Sub-Pop sound, thank you. A year ago, it would have been unthinkable for any band on Sub-Pop to draw so poorly at Maxwell's (I doubt a dozen people came out just for Love Battery) so I guess I'm not alone.

Friday, June 14

The Jack O'Nuts at Maxwells. Forget the opening band (funk weenies out of their element). Forget the headliners (local rock gods who need no hype). Jack O'Nuts. Wild gal singer with bigger balls than Mark Arm growling and screaming her way through granite-heavy grunge from three scruffy yahoos who looked like they'd been living in a van since 1976. Jack O'Nuts. I don't know where they're from, but find them, see them.

Saturday, June 22

ABC No Rio was the final destination but since it was on the way and the timing was right, I stopped first at McGregor's, a bar on St. Mark's Place, for a rare Saturday matinee there with Mush Mouth and Gangway Fathead. I had seen Mush Mouth play a few weeks earlier at the Pool Bar (ugh! yecch! formerly R.T. Firefly's and still a dump) with Scooby Groove; in fact, Mush Mouth's bassist, Sam Buonauguria, used to sing for the Scooby's. Mush Mouth is a hard funk trio with a prog-rock predilection for long, spacey jams. At the Pool Bar show, it was sloppy as shit and seemed unrehearsed and disjointed. A few rehearsals later and basically doing the same shit on stage

(they even wrote one song on the spot), Mush Mouth sounded a LOT better - tighter, more in control of their material, and the few "songs" they did rocked hard. They still need a real singer, though. Since Gangway Fathead didn't impress me at all at the Pool Bar, I split for ABC.

This was one of those shows with a lot of bands from all over, and without a strong local headliner the turnout is always slim at this place. I missed the first band, but I was told they were a cross between Spiro Gyra and the Grateful Dead. So I was actually kinda glad I missed them. Slap Of Reality from Tampa was starting just as I got there, and I'm glad I caught them -- catchy hardcore with heavy guitars, excellent melodic bass playing, and a really good drummer. They were just starting a summer-long tour. Sticks And Stones from Trenton, NJ were up next; the band's lost even more members (and the keyboards) so now it's pretty much just Pete's strident Clash-like vocals that keep it happening. Glee Club from Albany finished up. They've been around for a while and I've liked their 7-inches but I had never seen them live before. A trio, they play a tight, harder, and heavier sounding hardcore than their records might lead you to believe. ex-Glee Clubber Keith Allen, who left the band to form his own group, All Fall Down, was in attendance and danced merrily throughout the set. Well, he called it dancing. The way he moves, Keith is an embarrassment to white people everywhere, but he has so much fun that it's infectious. One more reason why I like shows at ABC No Rio so much, I guess.

FREEFALL at Mike Harbin's basement, Arlington VA, July 6, 1991

If this were Sassy magazine, Freefall would definitely rank a Cute Band Alert. Mike Harbin's best known as the bassist for Admiral, and he's now hooked up with a bunch of pals from Lancaster, PA in Freefall. Lead singer Keith is total teen idol material, from his Sub-Pop hair to his surf dude tan, and has a knockout voice to match -- gritty and memorable, with cool emo stage moves to match. The band plays an energetic, poppy sort of punk, more in the Lookout style than anything else I can think of, with lots of catchy bass runs from Mike and some stinging but concise leads from guitarist Gordon. They should be touring and playing out a lot this fall so try and catch them.

BIRDLAND, OUR AMERICAN COUSINS at Maxwells, Sunday July 7

Our American Cousins sound better every time I see them, with baby-faced frontman John King now firmly in control of this band's sound and style. Gone are the days when they'd all dress in black and play gloomy art rock; now it's all high-powered pop, with John's rhythm guitar providing the locomotion and bassist Sally -- winner of this year's Kim Gordon Lookalike contest by a landslide -- adding some sassy stage moves of her own.

Birdland proved a major disappointment, and that would have been true even if they didn't blow the fuses four or five times at the start of their set (they brought along a home refrigeration unit to aircool the stage that drew enough power to light the Empire State Bldg). Up close, those bleach-blond moptop haircuts look fey, and the band's vaunted "energy" consists of them pogoing up and down for every song. I had this horrible flash of deja vu that I was watching the Chesterfield Kings back in '85 instead of the newest Brit pop sensation, circa '91. And to top it all off, when they did Television's "See No Evil" they fudged all the hard riffs with feedback bursts instead of playing all the notes (unlike, uh, every American band I've ever seen cover the song).

MATTER OF FACT, ALL YOU CAN EAT, GO! at ABC No Rio, Saturday, July 13

Pretty cool show, even if I did get there late and miss most of the first band. Sorry, girls. Matter Of Fact turned out to be a lot better than their demo, which isn't bad in itself; a real young band from south of South Jersey, they've got a dynamic lead singer and a really good, hard sound, lots of

powerful guitar and a powerful rhythm section that clobbers you on the changes. All You Can Eat features my longtime pen pal, fanzine dude and onetime Maximum RnR shitworker Devon Morf. These guys put on a terrific show, Devon risking permanent brain damage by doing magnificent punk rock leaps (forgetting that the ABC No Rio ceiling is only about 6 feet high) and then collapsing in a heap of emocore derangement on the floor. Songs ranged from the goofy to the magnificent. GO! - yes, the same GO! that gave us not one but two Absolutely Last Show Ever performances in the past - came back after several weeks in Europe, for yet another final performance. Actually, it was good to see Mike Bullshit back on the ABC No Rio stage - which he, literally and figuratively, built himself - and really good to see the band well-rehearsed for a change. (I think I've seen five different GO shows in which the band was playing after only one or two practices with that lineup). New bassist Steve proved a more than adequate replacement for the departed Anthony Emo. They played a long set, over an hour, which for GO means they did something like 112 songs. Can't wait for the next farewell performance.

BRUCE WAYNE, DICKIES at Maxwells, Wednesday, July 24

When Adrenalin O.D. finally self-destructed, guitarist Bruce Wingate and bassist Wayne Garcia decided to form their own band. Hence, Bruce Wayne. Get it? They recruited Joel Weinberg on drums (who played in Littlehood with Wayne and Keith Hartel, another ex-A.O.D. bassist now in Motel Shootout) and there you go. What's it sound like? A whole lot like latterday A.O.D., actually, without the big catchy hooks; instead, the music's a little harder and more forceful, but still with that buoyant sort of Cheap Trick pop feel. Wayne makes a pretty good frontman too, singing about half the songs.

The Dickies really surprised me. It's fitting that they were touring behind their greatest hits lp on Taang, since they really are (like their punk contemporaries, The Ramones) a greatest hits band these days. But they still rock, they're still funny as shit, they still crank it up to 11 for the whole set, and I had a ball. If you get a chance to see these guys before they get hauled off to the Old Punks Home, do it.

BONE ORCHARD, MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES at Maxwells, Friday, July 26

I had been hearing a lot about Bone Orchard and seeing their name on bills with bands I like (Motel Shootout, especially) so this seemed like a good chance to check them out close to home. Well, it was an experience. As I'm walking in to pay at the door, Kevin the deejay comes out and grabs me. "When you see this opening band," he tells me, "you're gonna laugh." No, I'm not, I demur, I never laugh at bands. I have too much empathy for their artistic struggle, too much professionalism as a rock critic.

Needless to say, I laughed.

Imagine, if you're old enough to remember, every swinish glam-wannabe punk metal band that ever opened for the Dictators at Max's Kansas City. The back of the stage is covered by the band's 6 foot by 6 foot banner. The lead singer's got his shirt off before the band hits the first chord. Somebody's heavy metal biker chick girlfriend is standing in front of the stage in a mini-skirt and stiletto heels taking pictures. There's guitar solos, bass solos, drum solos. They cover "Helter Skelter." More solos. Ah, the good old days.

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones come out, eight or nine of them, I lost count, all wearing plaid. "Hey, we're not about sneakers," says the lead singer to start things off. No, you're about taking money from Converse to make commercials and convince kids it's cool to wear those fucking overpriced sneakers. Talk about rubber souls. Anyway, sell outs or not, I had to admit I liked these guys. They do a mix of ska and hardcore, more ska than they'd probably like to admit; they've got a horn section and a great little drummer dude who wails back there behind all those other mofos. They're from Boston and they're a two-tone band (black and white guys), which is the sort of positive role model that can only help, especially in a place like Boston. And they work their plaid-covered tails off on stage. Okay, you read it here first. Bosstones are boss. They're not about sneakers.



ALL YOU CAN EAT



BRUCE WAYNE

photos by Jim Testa

PLEASUREHEADS, DOOMWATCH, URGENT FURY,
HUASIPUNGO, CHRIST ON A CRUTCH at ABC No Rio,
Saturday, August 24

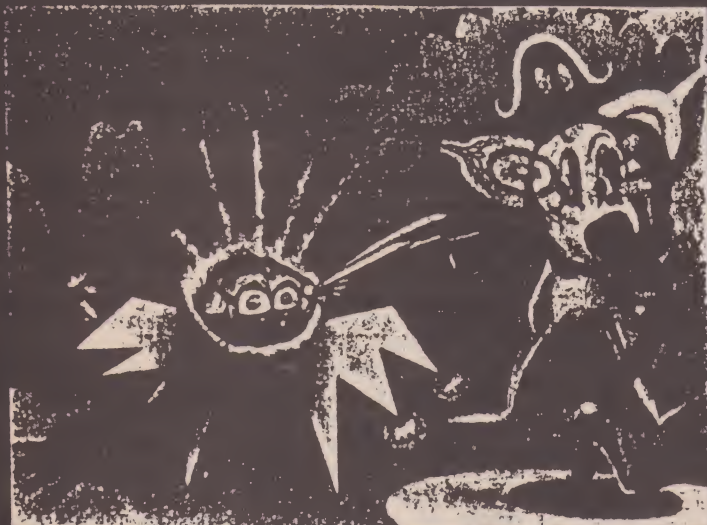
This was the first Saturday in a while that the ABC No Rio matinee wasn't so overcrowded and overheated that I could actually bear to watch the bands inside the club, instead of listening to the blare in the relative comfort of the backyard. Opening were a pair of Pittsburgh bands, the Pleasureheads who turned in a surprisingly enjoyable set of catchy hardcore with a great female vocalist, and Doomwatch, big guys with a sound heavy enough to match their girth. Urgent Fury were great, not only because of their energetic power-pop hardcore (they've sounded the same for something like seven years now, amazing) but because they inspired the crowd - big enough to make a pit, but small enough to leave some room to jump around - to do some inspired ABC geekcore moshing. Huasipungo, the Hispanic hc band, had a change of lineup, leaving vocalist Esneider the only Spanish member. They make a lot of jokes about how awful they are (which used to be true), but this new lineup, with a Japanese drummer, Esneider's vocals, and Dave Wilentz on guitar, sounded tight and hard and awfully close to something like a real band. The crowd went nuts, inspired by Esneider's maniac Spanish vocals, the band's newly improved sound, and the sight of Dave Wilentz in his bikini briefs. The crowd's spirits stayed in ultra-high gear for Washington State's venerable Christ On A Crutch, who seemed to have a lot of fun throttling the crowd into a frenzy with their own energetic, catchy hc sound. They sound a lot more SoCal than Seattle but play a great set, and afterwards thanked the ABC geeks for "our best show on this tour yet."

7 LEAGUE BOOTS, LIBIDO BOYZ, BIG DRILL CAR at CBGB,
Tuesday, September 3

Two bands here that I've wanted to see for a while without ever having the chance, so I braved the fates and, whaddaya know, actually got thru a night at CBGB without one hellish experience. Of course, it was the Tuesday night before school started, which meant most of the pre-pubescent mosh crowd

had an early curfew and kept the attendance way down. 7 League Boots, from Boston, is the new combo featuring Soulside singer Bobby Sullivan. I'd heard from friends who'd seen them that they did a lot of reggae, and most word of mouth tended to be negative, but here - as the opening band on a punk rock bill - they only played seven or eight songs, and only two of them qualified as reggae numbers. The others were all uptight, intense, tight, and rockish, very reminiscent of Soulside's post-adolescent D.C. angstcore. Bobby was almost unrecognizable, with dreads down to his knees and some ill-conceived facial hair spreading across his upper lip and cheeks like a mutant fungus. He still dances like a white guy with an Irish surname though. I'd heard so much about the Libido Boyz, seen them in so many fanzines, and even watched a few camcorder videos of their shows, that I felt as if we'd already met. Still it was nice to finally get to see the band in the flesh. They've grown a lot - musically as well as physically - since they emerged about five years ago as these skinny teenagers from Mankato, Minnesota with the squeaky-voiced lead singer and the sloppy, garagey punk rock sound. Nowadays, lead singer Billy has put on a few pounds and added a nosering, and shit, he's even learned how to sing. In fact, I thought he sounded great, strong and with a commanding stage presence that delivered every lyric like it was coming at you Federal Express. The band's a little more metal-edged than they used to be, although they stop short of long solos and, thank goodness, no wah wah pedal in evidence. Although the CBGB crowd (a sparse one at that) couldn't seem to figure them out, I like the Boyz a lot. Big Drill Car fall into that All/Chemical People/Doughboys niche of fast, poppy hardcore bands. Except for a slightly more fluid vocal style, I thought they sounded a lot like All, in fact, although a few friends at the show (like Sal Cannestra, who knows from SoCal popcore) said they were more distinctive than I was giving them credit for. At any rate, they put on an energetic and entertaining show, even if you don't recognize any of the songs (I didn't, except for the great cover of "Surrender," a song I can never hear too many times.)

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3rd BASS

Derelicts Of Dialect, CD
Def Jam/CBS

The dopest white boys on the block are back in full effect with another slammin' effort. This disc is chock full o' funky grooves, potent lyrical virtuosity and carefully picked samples. As on their debut album, 3rd Bass again manages to touch on some important topics concerning the hip hop nation and still keep it fun and funky. I have to ask, though, if perhaps they were a bit hard on old Vanilla Wafer... NAHI

- Alan B.

ANTIC HAY

A Few Cuts In Return, lp
Merkin

Gary Zirolu is a soldier in the battlefield of modern day living. He screams in frustration and loses way too much in everyday give and take. Naming his standard rock band (bass, gtr, drums) after an Aldous Huxley novel, Antic Hay's mission is self-preservation, and they fight some exciting battles with themselves and others that make for some great music. A few cuts deliver mean, self-inflicted wounds, as in "Kill The Watchdog:" "My mind hurts/this has gotta be the worst feeling in the world." Despair sets in over a mean guitar lick and the repeated line "Gotta jump out the window at the back of my mind" calls for an act of self-revenge. At times, Zirolu seems on the verge of becoming the unknown soldier of his Operation Stay Alive, but there are some excellent moments of hope, especially on the ballad "Spring," with its melodic call for rebirth and healing. It's one of a few cuts that call for a welcome home parade for a job well done.

- Philip S.

BILLINGSGATE

No Apologies, lp
Nemesis/Cargo

As the cover will lead you to believe, this is a hardcore record. Billingsgate throw out some excellent melodic hardcore that sometimes reminds me of Insted, Gorilla Biscuits, and even Verbal Assault (there is a slight metal influence now and then). Lyrics stand out, with some lengthy songs dealing with the Gulf War and sexism, among other things. The mosh parts and powerful intros are all here and done really well. Intelligent and recommended.

- Tom A.

BIRDLAND

Birdland, CD
Radioactive

More British pop, this time accompanied by a quartet of bleach-blond Brian Jones moptop haircuts and a pre-punk rock 'n roll sound that owes more to Dolls and Stooges than the Sex Pistols or Ramones. As much as I liked this initially, though, I've pretty much soured on these mooks after seeing them live. (Check out the concert reviews for more.)

- Jim T.

BLAKE BABIES

Rosy Jack World, CD
Mammoth

The Blake Babies' of the Grass Roots' "Temptation Eyes" is in direct contrast to something like the Divinyls' "I Touch Myself." Vocalist Juliana Hatfield sounds like the kind of lady who is constantly sighing and complaining about how she feels; the fatigue, the sexual frustration, the boredom. It is these paintings of such melancholy,



adult children, self-imprisoned by painful emotions yet unable to break free, that the Blake Babies do best.

Troubled guitarist John Poole Strohm is despairing on "Downtime," not quite as enchanting as a similar expression of anguish in R.E.M.'s more southern "Losing My Religion." Its highpoint is the expression of the loss of one's temper with a sampled yowl from one Henry Rollins. The sound bite is followed by an implosion of guitar screech that curls back like a boomerang, scattering tones in an interesting arrangement.

- Philip S.

BLATZ/FILTH

A Touch of Blatz/Destroy Everything, split LP
Lookout

Not a bad idea, one side for Blatz and one for Filth, basically like getting two EP's for the price of one album. And frankly, neither one of these bands strike me as strong enough to carry a whole lp by themselves anyway. Blatz sounds like what might have happened if X started recording when they were 15, or imagine that first Red Cross album when the MacDonald brothers were that old but with female harmony vocals. Filth sounds more like a NY hardcore band than any other group on Lookout; and that is not a compliment. I'm not sure what to say about Jake's Sam Kinison-like vocals except, maybe, switch to decaf, dude.

- Jim T.

CANDY FLIP

Madstock, CD
Atlantic

From such advance hype, the cartoonish cover and the fact that they cover "Strawberry Fields Forever," I was expecting something similar in spirit, if not in sound, to the last Redd Kross lp. Boy, was I in for a surprise, and a big disappointment. To begin with, there isn't one sound on this CD that's not fed through or created by a synthesizer, and that includes all the vocals. A few songs would make decent pop songs, except instead of the twang of guitars, you get the blips and beeps of computers. Although I can usually find something to like about any record, I'm at a total loss here.

- The Platterpuss

CRIME & THE CITY SOLUTION

Paradise Discotheque, lp
Mute/Elektra

This band has both paralleled and intersected with another influential Australian band, the Birthday Party. Both formed about 1977, BP, from Melbourne, fronted by the possessed Nick Cave, while C&CS were from Sydney and fronted by the equally bizarre, then-16 year old Simon Bonney. Around 1984, after BP broke up, two ex-members -- Mick Harvey and Roland Howard -- joined C&CS along with Epic Soundtracks (ex-Swell Maps). This version of C&CS recorded an EP and two albums before Roland and Epic left. Mick Harvey continued but moved to Berlin with Simon to start a new C&CS, as well as play in Nick Cave's Bad Seeds. The current ('86 to now) C&CS is completed by violinist Bronwyn Adams, lead guitarist Alexander Hacks (Einstürzende Neubauten), drummer Chrislo Haas (DAF) and bassist Thomas Stern. This version has recorded "Shine" in '88, "The Bride Ship" in '89 and their fifth full-length lp, Paradise Discotheque, arrived sometime in the last year. It's hard to tell exactly when, since they get so little press. Their recent tour of the States should've helped.

Although only 29 at present, Simon Bonney sings like an older man, world weary and possessed of dark, poetic spirits. Crime & The City Solution are a band fully matured; all arrangements on this effort are well thought out, and not really a rock release. These are more mood piece or tone poems. The production is perfect - often stark and haunting. Bonney does not have a pleasant voice, but he sure knows how to use it. His lyrics are his strong point. There is a constant subtext of Biblical imagery gone wrong, like a world run by evil, corrupt and even confused gods/kings. Paranoia is potent in "The Sly Persuaders," who warn us of the hidden dangers of "foreign saviors, violin players, tax evaders and soothsayers." This is classic, a powerful, melodramatic performance that feels sincere. Don't ignore this band, there time is really here.

- Bruce G.

CYPRESS HILL

Cypress Hill, CD
Ruffhouse/CBS

The bluesy funk grooves on this one had me bobbin' my head and tappin' my feet to a slew of angry, violent lyrics dealing with life in the urban battle ground of Cypress Hill, L.A. In these troubled times we're living in, this disc serves as an appropriate soundtrack; so, if you feel like taking a walk on the wild side, check this one out.

- Alan B.

THE DICKIES

Locked 'N Loaded 1990, CD
Taang

The Dickies really deserve a full-fledged archival CD "Greatest Hits" package, with all those great out-of-print singles and album tracks digitally re-mastered for posterity. But hey, this is punk rock, so instead we get the next best thing - this live album, recorded in London in 1990. You get all the hits - "Gigantor," "Banana Splits," "Nights In White Satin," the song about the talking penis, and you get Leonard Phillips' stage banter too, which a pure Greatest Hits collection wouldn't have. So forget the muddy mix and the somewhat rushed versions of some of the songs, get this while it's still in print or spend the rest of your miserable life Dickieless.

- Jim T.

DOGZILLA

"There's Always Something Wrong," 5-song EP
Invisible

A cross between Talking Heads and something once heard on a K-Tel commercial. Silly lyrics sung by a droning vocalist. Not really my bag, but maybe if I was at some late night hangout surrounded by drunk college kids, I might see things differently.

- Alan B.

DOWNTOWN SCIENCE

Downtown Science, lp
Def Jam/CBS

Something's slightly different about this hip hop effort for some reason. Maybe it's the fine meshing of live instruments with interesting and out of the ordinary samples, or maybe it's the effective blend of rap swagger and 80's style synths, to smooth jazzy grooves. Thoughtful, often spacey lyrics add even more adventure to this trip downtown with the boys of science.

- Alan B.

EMF

Schubert Dip, CD
EMI

Since when do fanzines review the #1 band on the Billboard charts? Well...when I got this, EMF were still British teenyboppers with no track record in the States. Now, let's face it, "Unbelievable" is gonna be one of those insidious hit singles that we'll all still be humming in spite of ourselves 20 years from now. And the rest of this ain't bad either. Maybe they're as big a hype as NKOTB, but the Monkees were a hype and left behind a bunch of good songs too.

- Jim T.

THE FAT LADY SINGS

Twist, CD
Atlantic

For those who enjoy labeling, categorizing and stereotyping, the word "wimp" denotes in a negative way sensitivity, caring, and other attributes. It also denotes fear. Britain's The Fat Lady Sings is able to find their way around such landmines of life with enthusiasm. The major theme here is a guiding light, specifically an "Arclight;" someone who shines with enthusiasm and leads another through the darkness like a candle in the night. "Man Scared" expresses the secondary theme, confusion: "I'm lost and I don't know why." The piano, strings and harmonica are frequently engulfed in a cloud of mistiness, like in Supertramp's "Take The Long Way Home." When this cheerful Fat Lady Sings, the soap opera of your troubles won't be over, but things will be a little brighter.

- Philip S.

FATIMA MANSIONS

Viva Dead Ponies, CD
Radioactive/MCA

Irish mutants The Fatima Mansions crossbreed elements of progressive rock, hardcore punk, experimental noise and cocktail lounge jazz in creating their frighteningly unique musical hell-baby. Syncopated madness and cacophonous melodies propel this textbook example of balls out, no-quarter-asked creative integrity. Fatima Mansions don't just stretch the boundaries of musical propriety, they plunge headfirst over the top. The U.S. version of their CD adds the jarringly clever "Blues For Ceausescu" and one other cut while deleting the equally wonderful "Thursday." Highly recommended.

- Keith G.

FELA

Original Surferhead, lp
Shanachie

This is the groove fest reissue of the year! Four long slow burn, funk-infested marathon jams - over an hour and not a bit too long. Recorded between '81 and '84, this is the perfect balance of both a sly, infectious beat and brooding political commentary. Everything about the mix and band is just right -- those dark pumping horns, esp. the bouncing baritones, and no synthesizers (yeah!), only an older style organ and electric piano. These are funk symphonies that build slowly section by section, nothing rushed so each part gets to shine. There is a constant feeling of uneasiness in all the lyrics, whether describing the pain and confusion of watching government forces attack his village or the thievery of international commerce. The spirit of trying to rise above the bullshit that holds us all down is genuine throughout, so find this offering, put on your dancing shoes, and shout "Right on!"

- Bruce G.

FIFTEEN

Swain's First Bike Ride, LP
Lookout

Great stuff. Punk as fuck, as John Lisa would undoubtedly say. Everytime I play this, I think my turntable's fucked and going at 45 rpm instead of 33 1/3, but not, that's just the way Fifteen plays. This is all-out over-the-top garage-rock punk played with total abandon, with subtle ska influences on some cuts. Imagine Operation Ivy trying to play their entire set as fast as possible after two or three cases of Bud and you get a rough idea. And hey, I thought I heard this when these guys played ABC No Rio back in the summer of '90 and now I'm sure of it: Listen really close to "Resolution" on

side two and you can hear Tom Moreno cop the entire bass part from "Tears Of A Clown." Of course nobody at ABC No Rio recognized it, those mooks wouldn't know Smokey Robinson from Smokey The Bear, but it's there. Righteous.

- Jim T.

FISHBONE

The Reality Of My Surroundings, CD
CBS

I will be the first to admit I love Fishbone. I've hung out with Chris O'Dowd a bunch of times, I've been witness to about ten of their shows, which can be a religious experience. I've bought t-shirts, stickers, lps, EPs, CD's, etc. So I was thrilled when I got to review their long-awaited, hyped, new 18 song CD, The Reality Of My Surroundings.

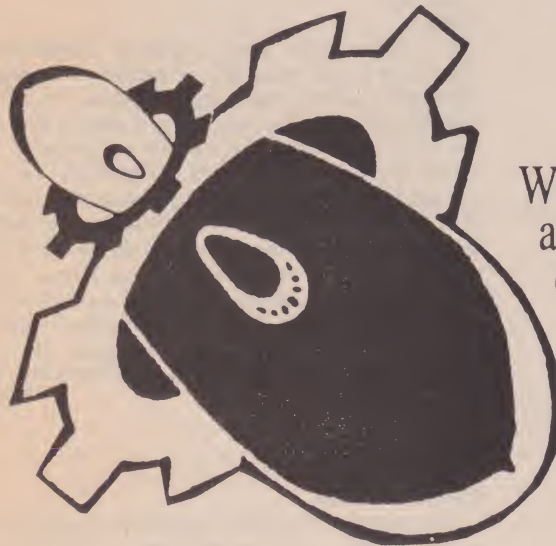
But then I listened to it. Disappointed isn't the right word. Maybe, "bewildered." I was expecting, I guess, a poppy, rocky, more funk, toned down Top 40 radio-ready Fishbone. Instead, I was kicked, punched, tied up, knocked down, and given the ghetto-lyric, power-punch, musical-goosebumped, ride-dream-nightmare of my life. WOW!

THIS is Fishbone.

The title of this album is a great and appropriate phrase, and the lyrics are even stronger than on 1988's Truth And Soul. Each member of the band is writing amazing music and to pack even more of a knockout punch, the band has added another guitarist/keys dude, John Bigham.

Musically and lyrically, this is overall their most consistent and most powerful exploration through the trails of soul, funk, rock, ska, and the cultural melting pot that is Fishbone music.

- Frank P.



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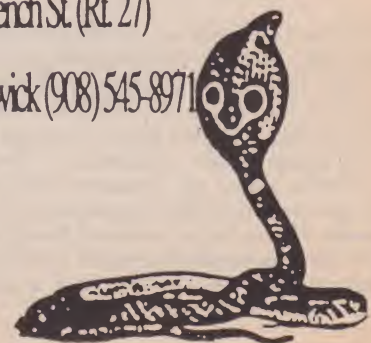
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FLOUR

Machinery Hill, lp
Touch & Go

If Jim Thirlwell from Foetus stopped taking himself so seriously and rented a sense of humor, he'd probably get along pretty well with Flour. The diversity that this man gets out of a bunch of machines is merit enough to take a listen, but what brings the album out of the cerebral cesspool for me is the sheer amount of fun he has with it. Flour has no problem switching styles in mid-stream -- everything from grunge to polka to pop/punk is butchered under a base of vocally-restrained industrial noise. Something to listen to when you get tired of the new Mudhoney record. Which should be soon.

- Leif H.

GODFATHERS

Unreal World, lp
Epic

If I died and went to heaven and God appointed me musical director, I would accept with a gracious smile, because the job would enable me to enlighten the world to the best music ever created. I would dump everything from those close-minded earthly radio stations and saturate the airwaves with bands like The Godfathers.

'Unreal World is a pop masterpiece. Monster hooks, catchy choruses, and elements of new and old. The world is truly overlooking one of today's great songwriting bands by ignoring this lp.

Lead singer Peter Coyne lays down his best vocal efforts to date. There is a sense of purpose, maturity, and confidence in his voice which carries the record and allows the rest of the 'Fathers to shine in all areas.

Some might argue the Godfathers had their day. I had my doubts. Now I am a true believer, and a faithful following godson. Give this record a chance, it will grow all over your. It's truly one of the finest pop records of the year. Carry on, 'Fathers.

- Frank P.

HDO

Soul Finder, import CD
Full Circle, 12 Bell St Newsome
Huddersfield UK

This British hc band sounds enough like Soulside to fool even the most well-heeled listener into thinking that these guys are Dischord's latest D.C. discovery. Passionate vocals, stinging guitars, a rhythm section that's lean and economical, yet so tight there isn't a spare beat to be heard anywhere... If American hardcore fans ever get a chance to hear this, they'll eat it up.

- Jim T.



THE GODFATHERS

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

INFLATABLE CHILDREN

Get Naked With..., lp
Evacuate

Very good recording on this 11-song hardcore album. Although it's far from being groundbreaking, it does end up being somewhat of a fun release. Song topics range from hippies to television to apathy in America. Evident influences are Poison Idea, AOD, and probably a great deal of NYC moshcore. When the band slows down a bit, the overpowering stomp really kicks in.

- John L.

INSANE JANE

A Green Little Pill, CD
Sky, 6400 Atlantic Blvd #220, Norcross GA 30071

Usually I don't have much patience for these post-modern divas in the Edie Brickell mode - especially when they call themselves "Yellow" - but this gal can wail like a classic rock 'n roll red hot mama in the Joplin/Slick mold. Of course that's only about a third of this CD's 13 cuts, and the other songs run toward treacly strummy folkie angst. This might've made a hot 4 song EP if they'd stuck to the bluesy angry numbers, but there's still enough going on here for me to keep an eye out for this band in the future.

- Jim T.

INSECT SURFERS

Reverb Sun, CD
Skyclad

The Insect Surfers were around back when I used to visit my pal Howard down in Washington, D.C. I won't say how long ago that was, but the President at the time was a Democrat, so you figure it out. Anyway, the band has since moved to California and amazingly still exists, still playing mostly surf instrumentals. Talk about life on the fringe. So what can I say? You want an album of ten surf instrumentals, here you go. It's better than that Sandy Nelson record that Skyclad put out last year, anyway.

- Jim T.

THE JIGSAW SEEN

My Name Is Tom, CD-5
Skyclad

Not much to recommend here, five Sixties-styled garage-rock tunes with thin production and unmemorable melodies. If you're even vaguely interested, I'd recommend a dozen other bands -- from Redd Kross to The 27 Various to Smashing Pumpkins -- before I'd even consider mentioning these guys.

- Jim T.

LAST CRACK

Burning Time, CD
Roadracer

Like Nostradamus, who predicted that the world should have ended ten years ago from nuclear war, there have always been charming false prophets, doomsayers, and tales of the second coming since the dawn of mankind. Out from the wilderness of Wisconsin comes a band named Last Crack that features an extremely insightful and powerful singer named Buddo. His bold and abounding vocals soul search and the band is electric and loud enough to lay down the gospel of strive. Many bands point out that Western Civilization has taken a turn for the

worse and merely suggest that listeners should somehow rise above. Last Crack knows the human spirit is infinitely more complex than to call for any simple solutions (or a Final one). They turn obsessive only once, on "Love Or Surrender." Although all this is heavy, it's not in the break your back sense; and the band knows what it's like to feel stuck in life. Songs like "Energy Mind," the album's strongest track, depict the many voices of God, the manic and the punishing, the kind and gentle, or the personal "Down Beat Dirt Messiah." The sounds are refreshing and affect you at many levels, no easy task. Last Crack show us we are our own worst enemy and out utmost redeemer, for energy can never be destroyed but only changed. The final track, "Oooh," sums it up best: "Love is the only thing that can never die."

- Philip S.

LIQUID JESUS

Pour In The Sky, CD
MCA

The gospel from this band is a "Faith To Believe," advice to believe in oneself while finding your way in life. The music is generally celebratory of life on an earth the band sees as a playground, but Liquid Jesus has trouble believing that the voice of God can be as stern as the Devil's, especially on "No Secret." "It's the Creator you're looking for/You live God's life." The music is abrasive, with guitar screech accompanying lyrics like "The word is no secret/your life is in your hands/the keeper will lead you/down the right path." There's a lot of operatic voices used for solemn prayer-hymn incantations, and Bruce Hornsby tickles the ivories on four numbers. Contradictions aside, the band practices the rebirth that they preach, glorifying Zeppelin and Hendrix riffs in "For Better Or Worse." In this day and age, with messages of hope in short supply and images of the Holy Ghost mutated on television, it's hard to know what to believe.

- Philip S.



LIQUID JESUS

PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

LONELY TROJANS

"Three Guys" 12" EP

Limited Potential, Box 268586, Chicago IL 60626

Looks like Husker Du, smells like Husker Du... Mmmmm, tastes like Husker Du! Stuff like this makes me think of driving home late at night from Hoboken. Streets are wet, beautiful oil refineries blot the view on either side of the Turnpike, foul smells... Obviously it's easy to associate pictures with music in this genre. Crisp guitars, great hooks, perfectly timed drums, waiting vocals... I can't put it more precisely than GO OUT AND GET THIS! You will definitely be hearing more from this band. Future projects include a date with Iain Burgess in the producer's chair. I can hardly wait.

- Mike L.

LOVE BATTERY

Between The Eyes, EP

Sub Pop

Yet another addition to the SubPop "caught in the early 70's psychedelic movement but still managing to grind your lazy ass into the ground" series. Grungy, acid-washed guitar sounds pervade the album to the point where you wonder if you haven't time-warped backwards 20 years or so. I see these guys as sort of a logical, more serious progression from Mudhoney; whereas Mudhoney got hallucinogenic at times, these guys are riding a wave of alternate consciousness to the point where it overrides your brain and flows right into your sub-conscious. Pink Floyd on Sub Pop. What a concept.

- Leif H.

MARY'S DANISH

Circa, CD

Morgan Creek

Quirky would be the best way to describe the inspired madness that is Mary's Danish. Offering strange little pop songs with titles like "Yellow Creep Around," "Axl Rose Is Love," and "Tracy In The Bathroom Killing Thrills," the ambient weirdness that is Mary's Danish is overshadowed only by the excellent musicianship and overall chemistry. Produced by Dave Jerden (Jane's Addiction, Last Crack), Circa delivers an edge as hard as any half dozen pretty-boy metal bands, tempering it with the searing vocals of Julie Ritter and Gretchen Seager. In a college radio market glutted with "alternative" bands, Mary's Danish stands out as the real thing, true originals in a land of mediocre wannabes.

- Keith G.

MECCA NORMAL

Calico Kills The Cat/Water Cuts My Hands, CD
Matador

This Matador disc collects the Vancouver, BC duo's first two albums into one nifty package. Mecca Normal is the sum talents of guitarist David Lester and vocalist Jean Smith. The 23 cuts here are minimalistic vignettes as dark and awe-inspiring as the night itself. Lester's six-string work is appropriately menacing, while Smith's vocals are hauntingly beautiful, a Patti Smith for the 90's. The resulting effect is one of somber self-reflection and personal agony. Few have done it better than this.

- Keith G.

MOVING TARGETS

Fall, CD

Taang

Sort of a concept album, the concept being how much Kenny Chambers' trio can sound like Husker Du without committing outright plagiarism. This is either an elaborate

joke or Kenny's totally lost it. Even the muddy production sounds like old Husker Du records, with mushy indistinct vocals recreating Bob Mould's trademark yowl. And there aren't any catchy Grant Hart-type songs to break up the monotony. Go back to Bullet Lavalta, Ken, please.

- Jim T.

MR. BUNGLE

Mr. Bungle, CD

Warner Brothers

Surrealism run amok, scatological lyrics swirling together into an acid-confused syncopated miasma of obscure wordplay and musical mayhem... that's Mr. Bungle's self-titled debut. Contractual obligations prevent Faith No More's Mike Patton from using his real name, but his vocals are unmistakable. His presence also explains why an unknown band from Seattle is making their debut on a major; hard to imagine the brothers Warner taking this big a gamble on a band without any clout. The question is, will you like it? Maybe. A random poll of Jersey Beat staffers split; Jim Testa hated it, Jodi Shapiro loved it but couldn't say why, and Keith Gordon says "it wins hands down as the most daring major label release of the year...an avant-garde blend of cacophony and madness, with improvisational production by Mr. John Zorn."

- Jim T. and Keith G.

NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN

God Fodder, CD

Columbia

God Fodder is an enchanting After School special about the everyday situations these guys face in the Great British Empire. Appropriately, they start with "Kill Your Television," the double basses popping like microwave popcorn. "If looks could kill..." is followed authoritatively



NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

by the line "I'd kill your television." Singer John Penney knows what it's like to feel worthless on "Less Than Useful," and having to smile when you feel absolutely miserable inside: "If you don't mind/I'll keep my thoughts to myself." The highpoint is "Grey Cell Green," about being disconnected from desire. Penney sings, "You're telling me/it's in the trees, it's in the ground," then realizes, "it's not/it's inside me!" as the guitars race nervously along and, with this bolt of self-discovery, fuse and pull apart again in synch. It's as exciting as hearing the first moon landing. The band frequently sounds pissed at each other, and they're mad at their parents as well, and sometimes they just sound lost. From start to finish, there's racing, melodic guitar feedback, tight power chords reverberating and clear vocals heavy with delay inside a tight drum. Don't rush off to your nearest fallout shelter - take some time to hear these guys!

- Philip S.

NEIGHBORHOODS

The Neighborhoods, CD
Third Stone/Atlantic

The Neighborhoods were never my idea of Boston's best punk band. In fact, they were always about as "punk" as the Cars or Til Tuesday...in other words, a commercial rock band waiting out its big break by playing the club circuit. Well, sometimes waiting pays off; here they are on a major label. Most of these tunes sound readymade for MTV and all-hit radio, from the Poison-ish glam rockers to the power ballads. What's really gonna matter in the long run is how big a marketing push Atlantic gives this (and so far, it hasn't been nearly big enough). Meanwhile, I wonder what guys like Dave Barton and John Felice think of all this?

- Jim T.

PALE DIVINE

Straight To Goodbye, CD
Atlantic

A midwestern combo that plays your basic variation of the REM alternative strum/rock thing, with a little funk. Sails along pleasantly enough. Your call.

- Jim T.

PENNYWHISTLE

Pennywhistle, lp
Epitaph

Fans of SoCal hardcore will dig this new combo, whose clean, buzzsaw guitar punk owes a big chunk of its inspiration to Bad Religion. Despite the band's rep at beer swilling cretins, the lyrics have a positive outlook, some of them addressing social issues like homelessness and others focusing on a constructive mental outlook. Like Bad Religion, the band has a good ear for catchy hooks and all the songs go nice and fast. I like it.

- Jim T.

PINK LINCOLNS

Headache, German import LP
Musical Tragedies, or
Empty, PO Box 12034 Seattle WA 98102

It's ironic as shit that the Pink Lincolns' way overdue second lp comes out on a German label called Musical Tragedies, because that's exactly what this is: one of America's greatest unsung punk bands can't even get their album released in the U.S. Shit! Well, listen closely, write to Empty Records in Seattle and they'll send you one of these for eight bucks (which is how I got mine) and I absolutely guarantee you won't regret it. Totally insane

spawn-of-Satan vocals from Chris Barrows combine with flawless buzzsaw punk guitar riffs; Screeching Weasel fans take note, is Ben Weasel Chris Barrows' mutant bastard offspring? Could be. You also get the classic (and out of print) "Cotton Mather" 7-inch on here. If you think you know punk rock and you don't know the Pink Lincolns, think again.

- Jim T.

PINK SLIP DADDY

Antidissestablishmentarianism, lp
Skyclad

This one really had me going - its front cover, replete with neon warning sticker, has a concert picture that vaguely reminds me of a NY ska band. The back cover blurbs hint at an intelligent crack at emulating late-70's style English punk. The record itself, unfortunately, sounds like Sha Na Na trying to resurrect themselves from whatever godawful mausoleum they're buried in. If the bands they get for high school reunions were tied down and forced Thorazine, they'd probably sound a lot like this. I mean, that whole 50's Revival thing is cute for a few minutes at a time, but when they start dragging out the vibrato organ and the clavinet, it's all over for me.

- Leif

POLLEN ART

Rivers Of Fire, lp
Mindpower, PO Box 827 Ontario CA 91762

I really hope this sort of thing doesn't become a trend. Picture it: thousands of post-menopausal punk rockers struggling to keep playing in bands so they can devote entire albums to songs about how much fun they used to have and how lame it is being old. Musically, this is okay melodic stuff, but I can't quite see people going out to see this band, singing along with fists in air to lyrics like, "I'm just an old punker/I'm past my prime." Yeah!

- Bill L.

READY FOR THE WORLD

Straight Down To Business, CD

When these brothers came on the scene a few years back, they were a serious "Prince bite." These days, they've added rap and updated beats to their repertoire and it's still nuttin' new. Each song comes off as a desperate attempt to grab hold of the ever-elusive hit record formula. This album is all pop/r&b business with no real soul.

- Alan B.

RHYTHM COLLISION

Pressure, lp
Dr Strange/Collision, PO Box 7000-117, Alto Loma CA 91701

This trio reminds me a lot of Boogada-era Screeching Weasel, what with its endless onslaught of catchy hooky buzzsaw popcore and bright, buoyant vocals with a slightly snotty twist. I remind hearing a 7" by them a few years ago and thinking they would probably make a pretty good album one of these days. Here it is.

- Jim T.

RIDE

"Kaleidoscope" 7 song CD
Sire/Reprise

"Kaleidoscope" proves that Ride can rip off the Byrds with as much authority as anyone since Husker Du did "Eight Miles High." But the six live cuts that follow did little but convince me that Ride is basically a studio band.

- Jim T.

SAMIAM

Soar, LP
New Red Archives, 6520 Selma Ave #1305, Hollywood
CA 90026

"Soar" is right. This album will brighten your day and send your spirits flying toward the stratosphere. I don't even want to use tired phrases like "melodic hardcore," which you'll read a dozen times in this issue alone. Just take my word for it; Samiam stands alone when it comes to music with energy, vitality, integrity, and heart. If you could put joy in a bottle, it would look like this record sounds.

- Jim T.

SHUDDER TO THINK

Funeral At The Movies, lp
Dischord

Having had a (live) tape of most of these songs a while ago, and considering the fact that Shudder To Think are currently my favorite band, this one's sure to get a good review from me. This is their most accessible, clean, and - dare I say it - pop/punk release to date, with an emphasis on the pop. "Funeral" also sees a more full, powerful, and punch production (mixed by Wharton Tiers, who needs no introduction). From the innocent, pre-adolescent poetry which gets wrapped up in enchanting, melancholy harmonies, to the mind-fucking Sonic Youth-inspired noise/spoken word piece "Ride That Sexy Horse," this album shouldn't be overlooked.

Two minor gripes: 1) the Hendrix cover is silly and unnecessary and 2) lyrics weren't provided for anything except the spoken word piece. Regardless, this is easily one of the top releases of the year, continuing Dischord's nearly perfect track record.

- John L.

SKINYARD

The Bulldog Single, 10" EP
Cruz

Altho I find it extremely ironic that the chief person to blame for the Sub-Pop sound is now recording for another label, it's easy to see why Jack Endino and Skinyard would go to Cruz Records. This EP sucks. I hear much better things about the new album but if it's full of more bad Beatles remakes, I'm just going to have to stop listening to all the Skinyard hype. This is not the same Skinyard that recorded "Fist Sized Chunks;" this is a kinder, gentler Skinyard. If they start singing about 1000 points of light, I'm going to puke.

- Leif H.

SMASHING PUMPKINS

Gish, CD
Caroline

This sounds like the Poster Children with a psychedelic twist, not too surprising since both bands were discovered by Mike "Starmaker" Potential back in Champaign, Illinois. Smashing Pumpkins never get fancy, they just give you cut after cut of slashing powerchord guitar and trashy vocals that sound like they're blaring right out of the neighbor's garage. Provided the neighbors have 24-track studio equipment and Butch Vig providing an excellent mix while the kids practice.

- Jim T.

SNAKES

Happy, lp
Adult Swim/Dischord, PO Box 5960 Wash DC 20016

Pretty cool multi-faceted weird pop (odd for a half-Dischord release, produce by Ian MacKaye, no less) with some production moments reminding me of cheery, early



PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

SHUDDER TO THINK

80's pop which, hey, I happen to like quite a bit. Some of this is just too odd, but other tunes are catchy enough to cross over into greatness. And love songs about girls named Olga are neat.

- Bill L.

STRAITJACKET FITS

Melt, lp
Arista

I always liked this band. I can't explain why, exactly, but their songs were always the greatest way to feel better after a shitty day. Finally, an American major has picked them up. All the songs on this lp show why these guys are one of New Zealand's finest, with a liquid melodic quality that's matched by none. The best bets are "Missing Presumed Drowned," "Down In Splendor," and "Skin To Wear," but I'll bet this lp tops the critics charts come December. If you like luscious pop songs, then you need this album.

- Jodi S.

STRETCHHEADS
23 Skinner, 12" EP
Blast First

Now that the Butthole Surfers have taken too much acid and forgotten their high energy industrial roots, it's good to find a band that remembers how to kick ass using the same weapons as the Surfers' Locust Abortion Technician lp. The Stretchheads, a band from Glasgow, Scotland, manage to resurrect the essence of old Buttholes while throwing in some Scratch Acid and a healthy dose of British humor. "23 Skinner" is a psychotic medley of driving beats interwoven with maniacal screeching, which suddenly turns into the theme from the tv show "Rhoda." The second side of this lp, subtitled "Housewife Up Your Fuckin Arse Music," is an experiment in psychedelic grunge that would have Steve Albini writhing in orgasms if he weren't so busy destroying the Pigface record. The only problem I have with this release is that there isn't more of it.

- Leif

RICHARD THOMPSON
Rumor And Sigh, CD
Capitol

Richard Thompson is a shrewd observer of the human condition. Guitars, mandolin, organ, harp and cymbals are the backdrop for his modern day tragedies, where the down and out don't just exist on the fringes -- they're the average dysfunctional family! On "Read About Love," junior learns the facts of life from Hustler magazine instead of his folks and gets romance all wrong: "So why don't you moan and sigh?/Why do you sit there and cry?" There's the not-so-pretty picture of a suburban "Psycho Street," where cheerless neighbors torment themselves, their families, and each other. But there's a certain emotional detachment, like that of a news broadcaster, when Thompson advises us to "Keep Your Distance." Other songs, like "I Misunderstood" and "You Dream Too Much," have strong melodies and choruses that add to the drama, because here, Thompson isn't simply commenting as an outside but as a living part of the story. It's like when those CNN announcers were broadcasting from Bagdad when the bombs started to fall; The viewer knew that behind the veil of "objective" reporting, those reporters were scared shitless - and that's why it made such great viewing.

- Philip S.

URBAN DANCE SQUAD
Mental Relapse, CD-5
Arista

When I saw these guys perform live sometime last year, I was impressed by frontman Rudeboy's manic stage presence, even if the band's overall performance didn't particularly blow my mind. This 5-song CD ain't too bad if you're into funk/rock bands from Holland who sound like they're being fronted by Eazy-E. Two of the tunes are live, two are re-mixes, and one's a lame ditty about a chick who likes to hitchhike until she gets her feelings hurt. Yeah, it ain't too bad, but I'm still looking for a deeper shade of soul.

- Alan B.

VOLCANO SUNS
Career In Rock, lp
1/4 Stick/Touch & Go, PO Box 25342, Chicago IL 60625

This is my first ever time hearing the Volcano Suns, and I'm glad I got the chance. Their songs combine elements of moving and driving melodies, dissonance and

abrasiveness. The first song, "Blue Rib," sets the standard, and from there they continue to get your head bouncing and the toilets overflowing.

- Tom A.

THE WONDER STUFF
Never Loved Elvis, lp
Polydor

As good as their first two albums were, this is far and away the best record that The Wonder Stuff has released. Their albums were always inconsistent, with many songs missing the mark. With "Never Loved Elvis," they've come into their own as songwriters and, more importantly, as record makers. Although each song has a basic guitar, bass and drums foundation, they use a number of other instruments to add texture and extra flavor. Accordions, mandolins, banjos, fiddles, harmonicas, synthesizers (usually a dirty word in my vocabulary), Hammond organ and strings are all used to very good effect at some point. What I like most about this album is that I've played it six or seven times, and every listen brings some new discovery, be it the mandolin lead of "Caught In My Shadow" or the Beatlesque harmonies of "The Size Of A Cow." Many albums sound great at first and then get boring, but this one just keeps getting better and better each time I play it.

- The Platterpuss

THE ZEROS
4-3-2-1...Zero, CD
Restless

Just what the world's been waiting for: A Ziggy Stardust tribute band. Next.

- Jim T.

== COMPILATIONS ==

20 EXPLOSIVE DYNAMIC SMASH HIT EXPLOSIONS!
Pravda

Ever see those incredibly cheesy compilations of Top 40 shlockola from the 70's, usually advertised on the Late Late Show and all gussied up with rainbow-colored graphics to catch your eye? Well, the guys at Pravda in Chicago put together their own Super Smash Hit compilation, using mostly (but not exclusively) Chicago punk bands, and have come up with a witty and really entertaining hunk of music. The treatments of these songs range from reverent recreations of the originals, like The Sneetches and Shoes teaming up for the Raspberries' "I Wanna Be With You," to the goofy (Spies Who Surf doing "Hocus Pocus") to anti-versions like No Empathy's "The Night Chicago Died." And this will probably be your last chance to hear God's Acre (who broke up, but not before recording an inspired guitar jam freakout on "Mississippi Queen").

- Jim T.



ABSCISS #1 #2

% Ben Davis, 104 Willowdell, Toccoa GA 30577

I'm always impressed when a really good looking new fanzine sprouts out of some small, out of the way town where there can't be much of a "scene" or support for this sort of punk project. Abscess is exactly that sort of thing. Cool interview with Ohio's off-the-wall Sockeye (with appropriately psychedelized graphics), also the Celibate Commandos, poetry, reviews, and some arty photos.

AGAINST THE GRAIN #2

1350 S Wood Ave #C3, Linden NJ 07036

Dave Koenig's ranting and ravings, with some zine reviews, an interview with Urgent Fury, and a long piece on Dave's favorite old tv shows.

ANKLEBITE #12 Free with 3 stamps

% Chris McCaw, 1498 Wright Ave, Sunnyvale CA 94087

Some has grown into much more than just a skateboard zine, altho it still boasts some breathtaking photos (only now, they're not just of skateboarders but arty still lifes and whatnot). Besides the fine artwork, there's an interview with Plaid Retina. Definitely one of the best "free" zines around anywhere, and one of the best looking zines out right now.

ASSAULT WITH INTENT TO FREE #9 \$1.50

PO Box 8722, Minneapolis MN 55408

Gee, if I were a little more organized, Jersey Beat would look this good. Not that Profane Existence is kaput, this is your best source for alternative/anarchist information as well as first-rate punk rock interviews and reviews, outside of Maximum Rock N Roll. This ish has a long chat with the Profane Existence folk and the band Trusty, and essays on the Gulf War and the International monetary fund.

BLACK MARKET #9 #3

405 W Washington St #212, San Diego CA 92103

Back after a long hiatus, Black Market is (was) infamous for its amazing monster art (still there), the sick but funny "Testicle Head" comic strip there (still there) and the freaky Famous Monsters Of Filmland type layouts (still there). Kind of a cross between a monster comic and a punkzine, the color cover alone is worth it - plus mine came with a sticker and a Testicle Head mini-comic stapled inside.

BOUNCING CASKET \$1.50

104 Wilkinson, East Prairie MO 63845

There are more NJ bands in this issue of Missouri's Bouncing Casket than you usually find in Jersey Beat! Bouncing Souls, Sticks & Stones, The Ordinary Boys, plus NYC's scumrock gods Norman Bates and the Showerheads comprise the interviews, plus reviews and (NJ) scene news.

BUSHWACKER #4 \$1.75

250 River St, Waltham MA 02154

The Jaw issue ('breaker and 'box interviews) as well as Ol Pollol, Verbal Assault, Media Children, and a piece on draft registration that you should read if you're turning 18 anytime soon.

BUTT UGLY #5 \$1.50

408 E Roberta Ave, Waukesha WI 53186

Cory takes on a partner this issue, co-editor Jason Lone Wolf (who comes out in this issue's "Queer" section) and interviews with grindcore band Distruct, Jawbreaker, Jawbox, and Tom of Dearray Fanzine. Nice layouts and good reading, plus the latest Milwaukee scene report.

CHAIRS MISSING "Start To Move" Issue \$2.50

PO Box 375, Fairfield CT 06430-0375

Scott Munroe's zine, this time around chatting with Superchunk, Sebadoh, and Beat Happening, plus lots of reviews and some cheesecake photos.

CRANK #1 \$1.75

108 Lexington Dr, Williamsburg VA 23188

Another zine that borrows its layout from Conflict -- two columns, few graphics, and unfortunately the editor has a word processor that prints in dot-matrix type. (Yuk). Still a pretty good first effort, with a Superchunk interview (most interviewed band in America lately), NYC's Helmet, Solomon Grundy, and lots of reviews.



CREWCUTT #2 #3

% Kevin Zarbo, 621 Minnesota Ave, Buffalo NY 14215

#3 gets you a big hefty zine with all the usuals -- interviews, reviews, scene reports, and cartoons, with an emphasis on hardcore thrash.

EAR OF CORN #20 #1

PO Box 2142, Stow OH 44224

This is weird Dave from Sockeye's fanzine, altho the zine has settled down into downright respectability. Lots of zine reviews start this one off, followed by three straightforward band interviews with bands you've probably never heard of, along with some nifty graphics.

EXCURSION #4 \$1.50

PO Box 3103, Bellingham WA 98225

A good looking zine with its own unique layout ideas and a lot of short think pieces from different writers, plus interviews with Slap of Reality, reviews, and photos. Cool.

EXTRAVAGANZA #2

Casilla 16732, Santiago 9 CHILE

It's all in Spanish, although the editors are bi-lingual and welcome American pen pals. They're mostly into thrash metal, with forays into weird noisy shit like the Butthole Surfers and The KLF.

FANATICISM LEADS TO DESTRUCTION #1 #2 U.S.

% Oded Tal, Kibbutz Dan, 12245 DNGE, ISRAEL

You might remember Oded Tal, our Israeli scene reporter from last issue. Since then, Oded has put together his own zine, a massive undertaking resembling your typical British anarchy zine, lots of mail interviews with an international array of hardcore bands, scene

FREAK #1 \$1.50

305 No. Ingersoll St, Madison WI 53703

Every page of this half-size zine is like a little art poster, self-contained, which conveys either an oblique message or just an unnerving image.

GODSEND #16 #2

% Todd Zachritz, 1401 Fuquay Rd, Evansville IN 47715

Editor Todd's on a gothic kick this issue, with Alien Sex Fiend, Mission of Safety, and His Name is Alive interviews, as well as a piece on a cassette-only label and lots of reviews.

JACKHAMER POGOSTICK #6 \$1.29 ppd

% Matt, 2425 Holly Hall #F77, Houston TX 77054

Not quite as godlike as #5 but still some cool stuff with Pain Teens, God Bullies, Superchunk, reviews and some photos.

LIFESAVER #1 \$1

% Jon Gall, 556 Snowden Ln, Princeton NJ 08540

A couple of typical beginner's mistakes mar this debut -- a Bad Trip interview done on a dot-matrix computer printer that you can't read because it photocopied so poorly, hand writing done too small to read... But there's a lot of energy in this thing, and the editor is a good artist who's sprinkled his own drawings throughout. I'm sure it will get much better quickly.

LONGSHOT #5 \$1

PO Box 546, Furlong PA 18925

Yet another interview with Ray Krishna Cappel and a confrontational interview with Vegan Reich make up the bulk of this now-monthly zine, with the rest given over to an ongoing serialized novel and some editorials. Good reading and a bit different for a change.

MELTING POT (sase)

12001 97th Ave No, Seminole FL 34642

This is an increasingly popular idea, a one-page mini-zine or newsletter that can come out frequently without the expense and labor of a full-size fanzine. Editor Glenn Roberts throws together a montage of photos, scene news, cartoons, old comic book clippings, reviews and stories... you never know what you'll get, and you can read the whole thing in one visit to the can.

MINDSET #4 \$1.50

305 Haywood Dr, Paramus NJ 07652

This is the fanzine in which every page is a contribution from a different reader... well, sort of. Lots of pasteup art, some ranting and raving from various scenesters, and then an excellent (and long overdue) interview with WFMU's Pat Duncan, and an equally intriguing chat with the secret unseen member of Trixter (the keyboardist who plays on the albums but doesn't appear in the videos... I guess he doesn't look good in a ripped flannel shirt).

MOUTH #15 \$1

PO Box 2069, Decatur GA 30030

"The South's Only Rock Zine," sez on the cover. Well, let's call that poetic license. Cool format, newsprint zine flipped over on its side so the pages run the long way across, providing very wide spaces for interesting layouts. Lots of good photos and all the rock zine staples - interviews, reviews, letters. Done very professionally, straddling that fine line between maga- and fan-zine, but the bands covered are more offbeat than mainstream (Flat Duo Jets, Chainsaw Kittens and Butthole Surfers in #15).

THE NEW LEIGHTON LOOK #2 \$2

% Rod Leighton, RR#3, Pugwash N.S. CANADA B0K 1L0

Jersey Beat contributor Rod Leighton is back doing his own zine, a sort of cross between Factsheet 5 (lots of zine reviews, specializing in Canadian fare) and a pro wrestling fanzine, with some audio reviews thrown in for good measure.

ORGAN #24

PO Box 790, London England E17 5RF

I have no idea how much U.S. money to send for this, maybe \$3. It's a beautifully printed half-size zine, offset with a glossy card stock cover, and crammed full of graphics, text, and photos. The bands covered are a curious mix of thrashy stuff and British funk bands, and The Organ is apparently also the unofficial house organ for the British funk/punk band Atomic Seed. Full of lots of U.K. bands I'd never read about in other Britzines, so worth a look.

PINKY'S HIP POCKET #2 Free with 2 stamps

717 Congress #1, Ypsilanti MI 48197

An interview with Prisonshake and a Hunter Thompson-ish column by Tom DeJa are the meat; lots of neatly printed reviews are the potatoes. This reads like all the contributors do a lot of drugs, which is a compliment (I guess).

RADICAL PIZZA #4 \$1

PO Box 158324, Nashville TN 37215

A plunge into the controversial Church of the Sub-Genius kicks things off, followed by a Sisters Of Mercy interview, an essay, and some zine reviews. Kinda thin but well-written and thought provoking.

RHETORIC #1 \$1

% Brad, 971 Perkins, Sellery A, Madison WI 53706

Yet another fanzine from the Milwaukee area (the editor apparently goes to school in Madison). Not a whole lot in here but the editor's personality certainly comes thru in the hand-lettered pages that are sort of like letters to us, the readers, telling how this thing came together and what Brad was thinking as he worked on it. A couple of interviews and some poetry make up the bulk of it, plus some short reviews.

R.M.R. #7 \$1.50

PO Box 371, Maplewood NJ 07040

Interviews with some Biohazard and GWAR, some reviews, and a free issue of "First Chalice" zine (with oi, punk, and ska bands), a lot of bang for a buck.

SATAN ON A STICK #3 \$1.50

PO Box 6387, Annapolis MD 21401-0387

Poetry, musings, cut 'n paste art, and an interview with somebody who thinks he's Satan, all put together in an attractive package on glossy stock. Cool shit.

SHOELACE #1 \$1.50

PO Box 7952, W. Trenton NJ 08628

Shoelace combines the talents of two of Jersey's best zinesters, Bob (This Zine Sucks) Conrad and Erik (Stranjer) Szantal. The collaboration brings out the best of both guys and actually looks better than either of their individual zines ever did. A combination of informed opinion, well-written reviews, cool graphics, some photos (never these guys' strong point) and interviews with Jawbox and Fugazi. I hope they manage to keep this up.

SPILLED GUTS Summer '91 Issue Free w/ two stamps

% Chris Wagner, 12 White Oak Way, Trenton NJ 08618

Zine, show, and record reviews, and an interview with Laurel, Maryland's Commonwealth fill this slim but readable issue.

TEN QUESTION ZINE #2 \$1

% Jerod, PO Box 4203, Clearwater FL 34618

This time around, Jerod asks ten questions to Inspector 12, Johnny Puke, and Florida's People's Court, and reviews a bunch of stuff too.

TWISTWORTHY #3 \$1

4030 Cypressdale Dr, Spring TX 77388

I like the cool photos in here, but there are also reviews and band interviews (Intent, Starvation Army and Implement) for your reading pleasure.

VPNC #2 50 cents

% Matt Foote, 7781 N. Ave de Carlotta, Tucson AZ 85704

The editor of this sent it to me with a note that said "please give this a review, even a negative one." The title stands for Vegetarian Positive Nose Core, and there are some silly jokes about noses inside and a page of record reviews that show the editor listens to a lot of different stuff, even if he hasn't quite grasped the niceties of writing about it intelligently yet. The whole thing looks tossed off pretty quickly and I would guess the editor isn't old enough to shave yet.

VILLAGE NOIZE #11 \$2.50

48-54 213 St, Bayside NY 11364

Fishbone, Dino Jr, Buckperts, Run DMC, Lemmy, Cocteau Twins, lots of reviews, and clean layouts with lots of Michele Taylor's great photos.

WANNA COMMUNICATE #1 \$1.75

% Mike Simonetti, 16 Willow St, Bayonne NJ 07002

This originally came with a demo tape from the band Merel, but I'm told that's sold out. The fanzine has interviews with Merel, American Standard, Sleeper, and Jawbox, some reviews, and lists of the editors' favorite things.

WHO CARES? #2

PO Box 1181, Bethesda MD 20827

They didn't print a price or an issue number, but I know this isn't the first one and I can guess it must go for at least \$2 (the postage alone is 75 cents). Anyway, very "pro" style fanzine with a clean, modern desktop publishing look and an emphasis on the current D.C. scene, including Shudder To Think, Senator Flux, Highback Chairs (Jeff Nelson's new band), and Strange Boutique, plus lots of opinion columns and reviews.

JERSEY BEAT



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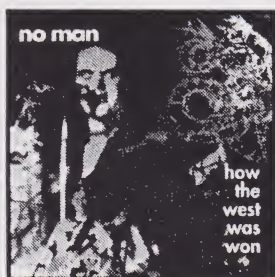
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RESISTORS



TINY SCARS

ROTZ / GEIL RELEASES

RESISTORS 'Tiny Scars': This 10 song debut is kick in the face punk rock with a bit of metal influence. "Your Fascist Mind" is a full IIC classic. The up-beat tempo and roughness pull together a tight performance. If the Resistors weren't from Germany you'd swear they might be the angry nephews of Henry Rollins. Great vocals and riffness that resembles the Misfits and Danzig but a definite new style and character. LP comes with 18.5"x24" heavy stock, glossy poster of cover art.

SWINGIN' TEENS 'Transfixation': Great, non kitsch hard rock with roots in the Stooges as well as early/mid 70's Golden Earring. The Swingin' Teens aren't holding anything back, and their music won't take "no" for an answer. This album is just about as loud, arrogant, determined, and visceral as it gets on the alternative hard rock/metal scene. If you can handle 100% attitude - this is for you!



EUROPEAN RELEASES IMPORTED & DISTRIBUTED BY ROTZ RECORDS:



ATTITUDE 'Kein Schlaf Bis Deutschland': A 5 song mini LP released in 87 from the new breed of California IIC. Departing from the punk rock norm of the early 80's, this record blends the heritage and tradition of both IIC and heavy metal into a style that would influence bands to come.

WE BITE RECORDS (GERMANY)



EROSION 'Mortal Agony': The 1st LP breaking the sound barrier with what critics have labeled 'techno-thrash'. Vocals from the pit and scorching guitars barely held in check by intricate song structures and precision musicianship.

WE BITE RECORDS (GERMANY)



HYPER 'Life's Hard ... Then You Die': This 84 Canadian release takes things back to the early days of IIC. A prime example of the beginning shift from punk to IIC. Hype's straight edge attitude is evident on their intelligent, critical lyrics that leave no rock unturned.

WE BITE RECORDS (GERMANY)

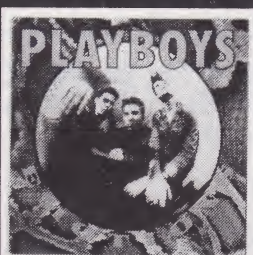


IIC COMPILATION 'There's A Method To Our Madness': A 19 song US punk rock compilation, featuring tracks (many unreleased) from the likes of Ludichrist, PTL Klub, Sloppy Seconds, Life Sentence, Amazing Grace, Ultra Violence & more ...

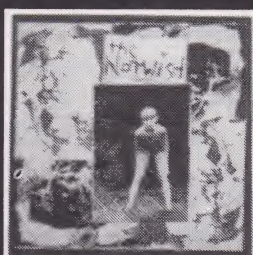
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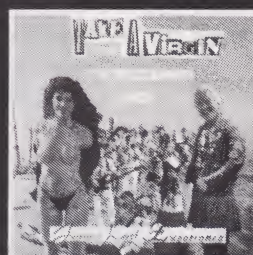
FUN GOGH 'Cut Of Your Ear': A non-stop 10 song rampage of punk/metal fusion. Picture open highways under desert sky, Harley-Davidsons and the smell of black leather. A powerful synthesis of metal and punk. LUX-NOISE PRODUCTIONS (SWITZERLAND)



PLAYBOYS 'Emotions': One of the few three-member-bands capable of packing 35 years of rock styles into one tight sound, with influences ranging from early Rock A Billy to Iggy Pop and the Cure. LUX-NOISE PRODUCTIONS (SWITZERLAND)



THE NOTWIST 'Notwist': If there is such a thing as folk-core, this is it. Don't let the word 'folk' throw you off though. R.E.M. this ain't. The twisting, power-tool guitars are reminiscent of old Dinosaur Jr., but with a heavier groove and unbelievable time changes. SUBWAY RECORDS (GERMANY)



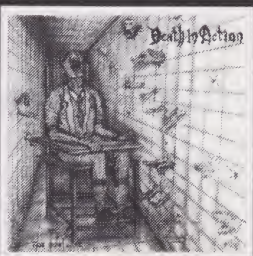
JAMES LAST EXPERIENCE 'Take A Virgin': A great 6 song mini LP representing the good old 70's punk style with a production quality of the 90's. Get this album before censorship gets it!! LUX-NOISE PRODUCTIONS (SWITZERLAND)



STEVEN'S NUDE CLUB 'Nervous': Strictly for fun power pop from Switzerland. Irreverent, playful melodies and weird low vocals make this release hard not to like. It's kind of Elvis on "Ludes" singing on a cheap detective sound track. A strange and danceable clubmix. LUX-NOISE PRODUCTIONS (SWITZERLAND)



TOUT PARIS 'Tout Paris': Psychedelic punk rock with pop sensibility which captures the atmosphere of the 60's influenced punk with their jangling guitars and dead pan vocals. Reminds one of Velvet Underground, and yet... somehow better. HUCKLEBERRY HOME RECORDS (GERMANY)



DEATH IN ACTION 'Just For Our Sakes': Death In Action's guitar assault hammers away at the senses while at the same time delivers an intelligent statement of human nature. Complex and structured speed metal with a conscience of human nature. WE BITE RECORDS (GERMANY)



SPERMBIRDS 'Nothing Is Easy': This was supposed to be their last album. The cream of Europe's punk/thrash crop take their final bow on this mix of unreleased tracks, new versions of old songs and live recordings of their farewell concert. WE BITE RECORDS (GERMANY)

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